

# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

**The Jesuit Educational  
Center for Human Development**

**The Challenge of Boredom**



**Knowing Your Inner Child**



**Superior's Relationship With Therapists**



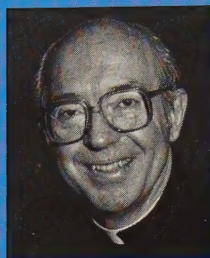
**Postnovitiate Religious Formation**



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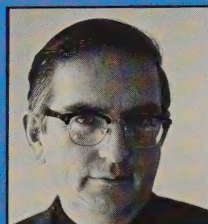




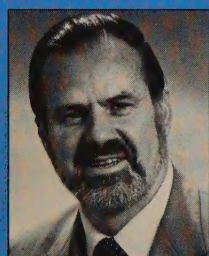
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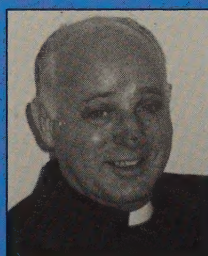
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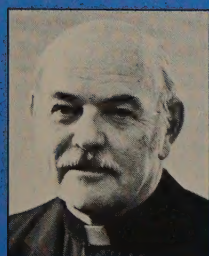
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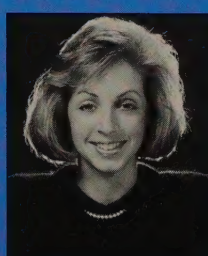
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# EDITOR'S PAGE

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## DECISIONS NEED SOME SOLITUDE

**M**y room had become uncomfortably warm a few minutes ago, so I decided to open wide both the very large window on my right and the house's front door on my left, in hope of creating a cooling draft. The tactic paid off almost immediately. But the unexpected effect on me was much more remarkable than just the enjoyment of a lowered room temperature. It was what I saw and heard, rather than what my skin was perceiving, that I hope I will remember for a long, long time.

Looking out the window—just beyond a few hundred feet of lawn and a dozen or so artistically spaced, slender-columned palm trees—I can see the sandy beach and the sunlit waters of the Pacific under fuzzy-edged cumulus clouds that are gliding across a bright-blue morning sky. About three hundred yards past the beach, a line of waves are continually breaking (almost inaudibly) across a coral reef that parallels the shore line. Near my window a choir of birds is singing. A few neighbors are sunbathing; another is patiently fishing in the surf. Beyond that window on my right is a serene paradise inviting timeless contemplation. It whispers the evidence of the ongoing presence and creativity of a caring and generous God.

But through the open door on my left a different world is revealed. A busy, noisy Hawaiian street bears the hurried, nonstop traffic of cars, delivery trucks, school buses, and ambulances. The stores, bank, bar, and restaurant across from my doorway attract a steady stream of customers who appear totally oblivious of the beach and surf such a short

distance away. The fragrance of the street is that of exhaust fumes. Not birds, but heavy and speeding vehicles monotonously drone away their unmelodic, serenity-spoiling song. On my left, beyond the door, is the everyday world of commerce. It is loud, and short on loveliness. But it is where most of us spend most of the hours and years of our lives.

What struck me, after I had looked out the simultaneously opened window and door, was the thought that we all need times and places for contemplation to counterbalance the noises and stresses of the marketplace. We need some quiet, beauty, and solitude to heal the bruises and abrasions that constitute the emotional wear-and-tear of our everyday lives. We need a setting where God can be easily found again and prayerful conversation resumed, when it has become difficult to sense God's presence and love amid the rush of our ordinary activities and hurried human encounters. But perhaps most of all we need to provide for ourselves a place where we can regularly go in order to ask ourselves what we are doing with our life, how we are using the gifts God has given us, and how we might better invest our time, talents, and energies in playing our part in the continuing creation of the world God wants us to develop.

A glowing contemporary example of someone who knows how to pause in the midst of a whirlwind life and make carefully discerned decisions is Olympic multi-gold medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersey. Since her brilliant victories in the heptathlon and long jump (including the setting of a new world's record) at Seoul last October, this immensely popular and fiercely competitive young woman has been dividing her time between administering a charitable community foundation and fulfilling a heavy schedule of speaking engagements. Still, she has taken the time to step back



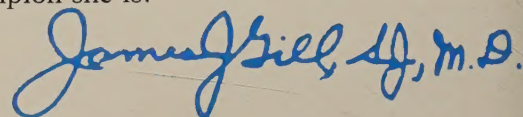
from these tasks and her work as chairwoman for St. Louis's March of Dimes to give serious consideration to the meaning of her life. She has recently written: "I have indeed been truly blessed. . . And once success is achieved, you then become responsible for passing it on to others, thus repaying those who helped you accomplish your goal. So, now that I have won, I can realize my duties and begin sharing the good that has come from my achievements."

Joyner-Kersee has decided, she says, to dedicate herself and her success to the young. "They are our future, and if we want our next generation to be winners, we must all take on the responsibility of really thinking about the ideals that we instill in our young people." She explains, "I'm a firm believer in the philosophy of the three D's—determination, desire, and dedication. It helped me become a winner, and I truly feel that these are values that will lift our youth a little higher. They don't have to aspire to be Olympians, but just parlay these traits into being good people and a success at whatever they want. There is no higher achieve-

ment in life than being a good person in your own eyes."

Realistically, Joyner-Kersee concludes: "I know it's foolish to even think that I can save the world or change the thinking of a generation—that is a responsibility that is unbearable. But if I can help guide a few and maybe influence a couple more, then I will feel I have fulfilled my reason for being on this earth."

What a wonderful woman! She shows us all how to turn away from the competing, the cinders, and the din of the stadium and to contemplate in peace and solitude the direction in which the Lord is inviting us individually to invest our time and talents for the well-being of others. What an inspiring champion she is!



James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.  
Editor-in-Chief

## Weariness Has Many Causes

**F**eeling tired all the time is among the five ailments most commonly bringing adults in the United States to visit their doctors. Richard Podell, a physician who specializes in treating chronic fatigue, in *Doctor, Why Am I So Tired?* says that the unforgiving stresses of daily life are the most common cause of incessant tiredness. He writes, "In 50 percent of the patients I see, stress is a major part of their problem. They have too many demands in their lives and cope by being tired." Podell regards constant fatigue as a frequent early warning sign of burnout, although, he observes, too little daily challenge can also make a person weary.

A study just recently published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* by researchers at the University of Connecticut found that the vast majority of patients with chronic fatigue had psychiatric disorders, primarily anxiety or depression. Only five of the 100 patients studied had medical conditions that brought on their exhaustion. Podell points out that from 30 to 50 percent of all depressed people feel tired and listless, but not depressed. It's often fatigue combined with a lack of enthusiasm for normal activities that signals depression, even in a person who does not feel sad.

A short list of some of the most common causes of prolonged fatigue was offered by *U.S. News and World Report*. It includes

- **Stress.** A heavy workload, tight deadlines, onerous commute, and other daily burdens take a toll. Unrelieved stress can produce chronic fatigue.
- **Caffeine addiction.** Some users of heavy amounts of coffee and cola drinks "crash" after the caffeine buzz wears off.
- **Depression.** Not all depressed people feel sad. They may feel tired and listless.
- **Reactions to medication.** Many drugs cause drowsiness or fatigue as a side effect.
- **Boredom.** If you drag yourself through the day and perk up after you leave the office, boredom may be getting you down.
- **Chronic-fatigue syndrome.** Some people may suffer from this illness, the cause and prevalence of which are still a mystery.
- **Disease.** Chronic fatigue can signal underlying illnesses, including cancer, heart disease, and hepatitis.



# GETTING TO KNOW YOUR INNER CHILD

*Jane F. Becker, O.S.B., Ph.D.*

**H**e was throwing another tantrum. I put my arms around him to hold him immobile until he calmed down enough to listen. I explained to him that Jeff needed space, too, that we all need to get out and have a variety of friends, that Jeff still liked him but couldn't spend all of his time with just him. I told him that I like him, too, and that he's a very likeable kid, even when Jeff is not around. He started to cry, much to my surprise, and said that he was afraid none of the other kids would like him and that was why he stayed so close to Jeff. I hugged him tighter and asked him why he thought that way."

This counselee is not speaking of an actual biological offspring; he is a celibate with no children of his own. This child he describes is an "inner child," a part of his personality that has become unmanageable. By imaging, or personifying, a part of himself, this counselee is using a currently popular method of self-discovery that is helpful in professional counseling and spiritual direction. Although this method is no cure-all for every personality problem, its usefulness in encouraging self-acceptance merits attention.

## UNRESOLVED ISSUES PERSONIFIED

The inner child is a personification of one's feelings, perceptions, and behavioral reactions that

developed in early childhood but were never integrated with the more mature feelings, perceptions, and behaviors developed later in life. Although one grows in wisdom and understanding, and thus comes to more adult ways of responding to life situations, one can often experience oneself reacting as though one had learned nothing new in twenty, forty, or even sixty years.

For example, one remains fearful of authority figures even when they are peers. Or one becomes shy before audiences in spite of repeated successes. Earlier fears, resentments, inferiority feelings, and misperceptions remain ingrained in one's reactions, split off from later learning as though two people lived inside the skin, one an adult and the other the child from the past.

Students of human behavior are sometimes put off by seemingly unsophisticated references to an imaginary figure inside the person. Psychology has been criticized for "personifying" emotional dynamics, turning the operations of the psyche into little people—id, ego, anima, shadow. There is practical value, however, in anthropomorphizing one's inner dynamics. In *Re-visioning Psychology*, Jungian analyst James Hillman explains that such images are needed because conflicting emotions act like autonomous persons. They are far more like characters in fiction than like elements in physics. One can understand much more about these dynamics by



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## The inner child carries wounds not yet healed, unresolved feelings, unfinished business

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envisioning each as a person having an independent interior existence motivated by personal intentions. These concrete personifications provide substance for what would otherwise remain abstract and vague.

Even after agreeing to imagine a "child inside," one still might not care to spend much time with her or him. After all, the inner child is an embarrassing side of the personality—still "childish"—and the inner child often leads one back to events of the past that one would prefer to forget. The inner child evokes negative reactions because it is formed from issues that have not been resolved in the course of time, issues rooted in earlier painful situations. The inner child carries wounds not yet healed, unresolved feelings, unfinished business.

As a result of these wounds, psychological retardations have also developed in specific areas such as friendship, self-image, assertion, or authority, where one does not react maturely. For example, a young man may be very mature in his work context but show infantile reactions in the face of a friend's neglecting him. Because of childhood traumas in the area of intimacy, his development has been blocked and he has not learned adult skills for coping with an occasional rejection. His inner child collapses into tears.

Ignoring this tearful child will do nothing to resolve the immaturity. The pain must be examined, the inner child listened to, the wound dressed. Despite initial aversions to meeting the inner child, personal growth requires that the child be faced.

A second reason for attending to the inner child rather than repressing it is that the inner child is

the carrier of one's creativity, spontaneity, affection, sexuality, and enthusiasm—qualities that first appear in childhood and that give zest to life. When the inner child is blocked from integration with the rest of the personality, these qualities remain inaccessible. Continuing to distance oneself from the child's immaturity deprives one of this vitality. In reclaiming the shadow part of the inner child, one reinherits life. Those who have successfully negotiated midlife will recall the burst of psychic energy that follows resolution of childhood issues.

### INNER CHILD NEEDS PARENTING

The first step in meeting the inner child is to acknowledge that it exists. The second step is to go beyond *thinking* about it and to start *communicating* with it. One leaves the safety of abstract commentary on childhood issues and enters into fantasy dialogue between the inner child and "me," that is, between the child and the adult whom "I" claim to be. My child and I begin to talk about our differences. Such "pretending" feels uncomfortable at first, but activating the whole inner child—feelings, memories, spontaneous reactions—allows the inner child to say so much more, to give more new information than would surface by merely thinking about the child.

Once one enters into dialogue with the inner child, there are positive and negative ways of interacting with it. Many people increase their troubles by trying to deal with the inner child in self-defeating ways. They try repressing, ignoring, disciplining (i.e., using "will power"), and attacking (self-criticism) this immature aspect of the personality. Such practices are just as ineffective with respect to the inner child as they are in rearing flesh-and-blood children.

A child's feelings do not go away simply because the adult says that they should. An inner child is no more rational than other children. All respond to harsh corrections with procrastination, depression, or forgetfulness; they embarrass the adult with further whining and slink away to erupt again at another inopportune moment.

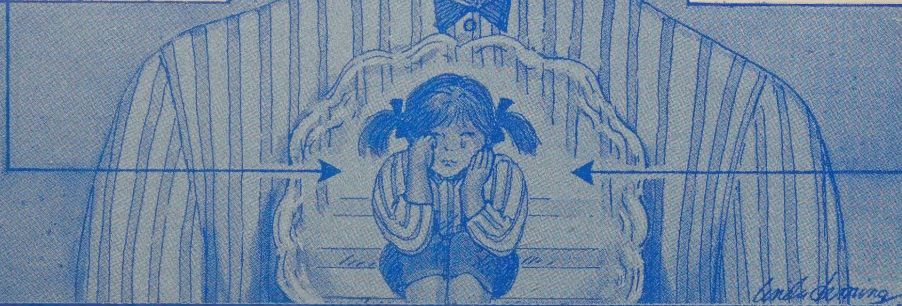
Ironically, one can be grateful that the inner child is not easily destroyed. Persistence on the part of the child is rooted in psychological needs that the adult self cannot recognize. In other words, the inner child serves as an alarm system. It carries a message for the adult. This message indicates the unfinished business or unmet needs that must be addressed if the person is to continue to grow psychologically. A common example is overwork. When too much of one's time has been given to work, inspiration eventually flies out the window, self-discipline falls apart, melancholy sets in. The inner child has begun to object. It cries out for affection or for play or for whatever basic need is



# EVERYONE'S INNER CHILD

FORMED FROM  
ISSUES ROOTED  
IN EARLIER,  
PAINFUL SITUATIONS.

CARRIES WOUNDS  
NOT YET HEALED,  
UNRESOLVED FEELINGS,  
AND UNFINISHED  
BUSINESS.



not being met. Wholeness will not be achieved by becoming a workaholic; the inner child lets the adult know this.

Rather than resort to child abuse at such times, the adult would do well to listen to what the inner child is saying and to explore ways of responding. One becomes a parent to oneself as one learns to provide for the inner child whatever was missing in the first, historical experience of being parented as a real child.

Good parenting of real children provides a model for how to deal with these troublesome leftovers from childhood. How would a good parent respond to a weeping or fearful or rebellious five-year-old? A regular diet of spankings and reprimands will destroy the child's spirit. Healing the wounded inner child means becoming a nurturing parent for oneself. It means holding, listening, explaining, and protecting the inner child from destructive criticism. Positive parenting also involves patience and a realistic sense of a child's pace, since children do not change quickly.

Admittedly, parenting also involves some firm limit setting. Children need the protection of firm but manageable boundaries. If one's personality is a bit addictive or hysteric, then the inner child may need firmness, but most inner children err more in

the direction of too much guilt. These children need more encouragement than discouragement.

## IMAGE CAN BE THERAPEUTIC

Some cautions are in order. The idea of the inner child has captured the popular imagination. More and more authors are using this image, while increasing numbers of spiritual renewal centers offer workshops on it. Enthusiasm for such an intriguing image can cause one to overlook the limitations of this approach. The inner child approach is one method among many. I have found the inner child image to be a powerful tool in therapy, yet I would not introduce it to everyone; some people are more inhibited than helped by the use of fantasy. Furthermore, the method can help a person to see inner conflicts more clearly and to return to unhealed wounds, but cure does not always follow automatically. Other tools may be needed. The most useful perspective is to think of inner-child work as one sometimes-powerful tool among many. It might be helpful to summarize precisely what this approach does for the person.

The inner child has proven to be a helpful image for personal development because it provides a way of facing personality deficiencies and painful



memories that would otherwise be too threatening to acknowledge. By relating to the underdeveloped aspects of one's personality through the image of a separate person, the inner child, one can maintain sufficient objectivity or distance to "dialogue" with the problem and thus move toward resolution. The image of a fragile child also evokes the necessary compassion for oneself that one must have in order to accept personal limitations. The concept of the inner child is particularly timely today for two populations, those in midlife and adult children of alcoholics, as both groups recognize the need to return to childhood to attain full adulthood.

As the concept of the inner child grows in popularity, descriptions of the child also seem to expand. Speakers and writers on the subject work out of several different schools of psychology, so in literature on the subject, the inner child is sometimes wounded, sometimes divine, sometimes shadow, sometimes real self. This proliferation of inner-child descriptions can be confusing, yet most are basically compatible with one another.

### AUTHORS DEVELOP CONCEPT

W. Hugh Missildine, in 1963, first presented the image of the inner child in *Your Inner Child of the Past*. Missildine developed three concepts: the inner child who lives on in one's adult life, the importance of being a parent to oneself, and the principle of mutual respect between the inner child and one's adult self. His image is of a wounded, vulnerable child. Drawing on his clinical practice, he writes in detail about a number of faulty parenting patterns, such as perfectionism, overindulgence, and neglect. He describes the effects of each pattern on the little child and the corrective self-parenting patterns needed later in life.

Transactional analysis was developed by Eric Berne in the 1950s and popularized in the 1960s by Thomas A. Harris in his best-selling *I'm OK, You're OK*. Harris described how one's multinatured personality switches "ego states," i.e., how one responds from moment to moment as an adult, a parent, or a child. The child state is constituted of one's reactions, largely emotional, to all that was seen and heard in those early vulnerable years. This definition of child is consistent with Missildine's, but transactional analysis adds another dimension in emphasizing the emotional resources to be gained from the inner child.

In *Born To Win: Transactional Analysis with Gestalt Experiments*, Muriel James and Dorothy Jongeward describe three inner children, two of whom carry a storehouse of healthy resources. The natural child is born first. This child is affectionate, curious, fun-loving, sensuous, and self-preservative. That is, by nature, one does not know the meaning of "I cannot love." Through this child the person naturally desires learning, seeks happiness,

enjoys sexual stimulation, and will do whatever he or she needs to do in defense against psychic abuse.

The little professor surfaces at about the age of ten months. This is the source of intuition and creativity. With unschooled wisdom the little professor can figure things out, including how to get one's way with adults. The little professor can resolve many dilemmas encountered in childhood but unfortunately is often squelched by demanding adults. This is a clever child, worth listening to when searching for creative solutions to old problems.

The last inner child to evolve, according to James and Jongeward, is the adapted child. This child wanted parental approval, feared the loss of love, and as a result had to adapt to meet the demands of these giant figures. Too often the adapted child reflects the most troubled part of the personality. Some typical patterns of detrimental adaptation include compliance, withdrawal, and passive aggression. The compliant child goes along with expectations on the outside and compulsively adheres to rules but does not deal with inner anger and hurt. The withdrawn child learns passivity: don't think, don't feel, don't do. Passive-aggressive children learn how to keep out of trouble, but just barely; they learn to annoy those in authority but seldom obviously enough to invoke their wrath. In the face of certain authority figures, many a healthy adult can see his or her own adapted child surface in an unexpected attack of obsequiousness, stage fright, or underhanded defiance.

### JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY COMPATIBLE

Jungian psychology has become increasingly popular as our age has become more concerned with issues of spirituality and midlife. Talk of the inner child is very much at home in Jungian psychology. Jung himself acknowledged the creativity of his own inner small boy. In his work, Jung relied on fantasy figures such as the anima, trickster, and wise old man to describe the dynamics of the psyche. This style of speaking—personifying psychological dynamics—is typically Jungian. The methods that he recommended for encountering these characters of the unconscious are also the same methods that are being used today for meeting the inner child: dream work, active imagination, fantasy dialogues, dance, drawing, working with clay, and so forth.

What Jung adds to the conversation on the inner child is the concept of a universal or archetypal child. This is Jung's way of indicating that the vitality and strength to be gained from the child are universal, inherent in our nature rather than personally acquired. Jung distinguished between the parts of the psyche attributable to personal history (personal inner child) and those attributable to universal human nature (archetypal child). The inner child is shaped by events in early child-



hood, by one's personal history of being loved or unloved, but archetypes predate one's personal history. Archetypes are motifs or predispositions inherited as part of the human species, as patterns of the psyche that have evolved from generation upon generation of human emotional experience. The child archetype is a very life-giving piece of this evolving psyche.

Janice Brewi and Anne Brennan discuss the value of the child archetype in their most recent book, *Celebrate Mid-Life: Jungian Archetypes and Mid-Life Spirituality*. They see the task of midlife as that of disengaging from one's overidentification with one's role (persona) and coming to terms with one's shadow. The child archetype is needed to face one's shadow; without it, one can take one's adult status too seriously. Through the child archetype, one can accept the more humiliating aspects of the shadow because this child is the source of simplicity, humility, and love for all creation including oneself. The child archetype also finds productive ways of reinvesting the energy that was going into maintaining the roles of the persona. It opens the midlife adult to greater consciousness through child-like activities of make-believe, play, music, art, and prayer.

Brewi and Brennan also suggest that the child archetype may be a crucial factor in healing childhood (personal inner child) wounds. At midlife, each of us must go back to make peace with the past. A universal or archetypal aspect of childhood is the ability to withstand pain and to rise again. With the strength of this inborn hopefulness difficulties can be overcome: "The child archetype incorporates our damaged child and transcends it." We bring this archetypal hopefulness to bear by giving birth to our child again, by holding and reparenting our child in the present.

Carol Pearson is another author writing within a Jungian framework. In *The Hero Within: Six Archetypes We Live By*, Pearson devotes a fascinating chapter to two child images, the innocent and the orphan. The innocent has not yet begun the journey, not yet been thrown out of the Garden of Eden. Innocents believe that everything exists to satisfy them, to take care of them and provide for them. Pearson remarks that this is natural for a small child but requires much denial and narcissism to be maintained in adulthood. Most innocents, confronted with the necessity of making their own way in life, move on to the stance of the orphan.

The orphan is the child inside who still feels the loss of early security and who still resents not being taken care of by others. Orphans are disappointed idealists. They feel powerless and abandoned. They appear angry but are profoundly fearful underneath. Like any other child, the orphan cannot be told simply to grow up and get on with the journey. Pearson discusses the difficulties of instilling enough hope in the timid orphan for him or her to

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## In reclaiming the shadow part of the inner child, one reinherits life

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give up this resentful passivity and take on the responsibilities of adulthood.

### ALCOHOLICS' CHILDREN FIND RELEVANCE

Charles Whitfield's *Healing the Child Within: Discovery and Recovery for Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families* may be the most widely read book on the inner child these days because of its appeal to adult children of alcoholics. Whitfield describes the emotional wounding of a child in a dysfunctional family, the psychology of shame and guilt, and the later grieving and recovery process. Whitfield's use of child imagery can be confusing, however, because he uses so many terms interchangeably: child within, inner child, divine child, real self, true self, and higher self. Equating the inner child with selfhood may give a maturity to the child that Missildine, Berne, or Jung would never accept. They would more likely say that the child represents an early natural healthiness that must be restored so that the later mature self can emerge.

### ENCOUNTER THROUGH IMAGINATION

Some approaches to the inner life are more practical than theoretical. Gestalt therapists, for example, would argue that one should not theorize a priori what the inner child is like; rather, one should find out by experiential encounters with one's own inner child. Reading others' accounts of the inner child is stimulating, they would say, but



in the end the only truly healing image is one's very own inner child.

Almost any imaginative activity—dreaming, modeling clay, dancing—can be used to encounter the inner child. The most common method is that of guided fantasy, especially fantasized dialogue. Fantasy techniques train the participant to focus on vivid visual images and then to enter fantasy scenes where he or she interacts with figures such as the inner child. This method is already a familiar technique for prayer and reflection. Jean Gill gives some examples in *Unless you Become Like a Little Child: Seeking the Inner Child in Our Spiritual Journey*. She elaborates on two useful scenes from scripture, the nativity and the story of Jesus with the children. Gill also shares numerous illustrations of how she has let her inner child join her in her own prayer.

Many more leads for interaction with the child are given in James's and Jongeward's *Born to Win: Transactional Analysis With Gestalt Experiments*. Gestalt therapists tend to ask for more overt participation in the fantasies. The individual is told to "experiment," change chairs with the imaginary figure, act out the relationship, exaggerate the movements. The dialogue that emerges is not imagined silently in one's head but voiced aloud complete with intonations and gestures. At first, personal inhibitions may limit how freely one enters into these experiments, but practice improves one's ability to follow where the fantasy leads.

Keeping a journal or writing about the fantasy is a common method when working without a facilitator. John Pollard provides help along this line in his *Self-Parenting: The Complete Guide to Your Inner Conversations*. This text is presented as a workbook. It is an introductory manual for those who prefer detailed, specific instructions. Pollard recommends daily thirty-minute dialogues with the inner child and a written account of all that the child says during these conversations. He provides a complete list of questions to ask the inner child while becoming acquainted during the first two weeks of meetings, then teaches several other exer-

cises for later encounters: resolving inner conflicts, nurturing the inner child, building self-esteem, establishing goals, and continuing dialogue.

## SOURCE OF WISDOM

Missildine quotes Walt Whitman's poem "There Was a Child Went Forth," which is about a child going ahead each day to become for years afterward whatever he or she looked upon that day. The concept of the inner child has also gone forth from Missildine's consulting room and been amplified by various theoretical contexts, by new audiences, new methodologies, and new terminology. It appears that both in practice and in print the vulnerable inner child has become also the source of inner wisdom and archetypal vitality.

## RECOMMENDED READING

- Brewi, J., and A. Brennan. *Celebrate Mid-Life: Jungian Archetypes and Mid-Life Spirituality*. New York: Crossroads Books, 1988.
- Gill, J. *Unless You Become Like a Little Child: Seeking the Inner Child in Our Spiritual Journey*. New York: Paulist Press, 1985.
- James, M., and D. Jongeward. *Born to Win: Transactional Analysis With Gestalt Experiments*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1971.
- Missildine, W. *Your Inner Child of the Past*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1963.
- Pollard, J. *Self-Parenting: The Complete Guide to Your Inner Conversations*. Malibu, California: Generic Human Studies Publishing, 1987.



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# A Superior's Relationship With a Therapist

William A. Barry, S.J., Ph.D.

**I**n the course of their adult lives, many religious and clergy engage in some form of psychological counseling or psychotherapy. There are many reasons for this phenomenon. Ministry, at least in today's world, makes great demands on the minister, and many ministering people find that personality problems get in the way of more effective ministry. Psychotherapy or counseling can be a very profitable formational experience for many ministers-in-training or ministers in the field, just as it is usually a needed formational experience for anyone engaging in any helping profession.

Second, certain crises, such as the diagnosis of a serious illness, the death of a parent or close friend, or a failure, can be more easily and profitably weathered with the help of some form of counseling. Third, at the present time of continuing crisis in the church and in society, many clergy and religious who coped well enough in the precrisis period find that longstanding personality difficulties cause acute problems not only for themselves but also for the community in which they live.

Finally, even with the best screening in the world, dioceses and religious congregations will still find that they have some members with chronic psychiatric disorders, such as schizophrenia or manic-depressive (bipolar) disorder. This article will address the issue of the relationship of

the superior to the counselor. Does the superior have any role? If the answer is yes, what role?

I believe that it would be helpful for superiors to know at least one or two psychotherapists in their area well enough to recommend them with confidence to members of their community or to get referrals from them for other counselors in the area. Counselors of religious or clergy do not have to be Roman Catholic or even Christian to be helpful, but they should not be consciously or subconsciously inimical to the values of priestly and religious life. An astute superior can get a sense of the attitudes and values of a therapist in the course of cultivating a relationship with him or her.

There are certain qualities that a superior should look for in a good therapist. Superiors should make sure that the therapists who work with their community know their own limits and are willing to admit them; for example, they should know the kinds of clients they cannot help and not keep such people on the string indefinitely. Since the psyche can be endlessly probed, a therapist should set attainable goals for any therapy, especially one that has formational goals in mind. For example, if a young priest finds that he has great difficulty ministering to seriously ill people, treating them mechanically, without any emotional closeness, the aim of the therapy should be to enable him to



## RELIGIOUS SUPERIOR MAKING A REFERRAL



be a more effective ministering person with such people, not to explore every nook and cranny of his personality. Finally, superiors should be able to consult with the therapist regularly about questions and relationships in their communities that trouble them and to ask honest, forthright questions about the kinds of psychological help best suited to certain situations or people.

The last paragraph indicates one role that superiors can and often do play with regard to psychotherapy for a member of the community. They can often serve as referral sources when one of their people needs such help. Such referral can occur at the initiative of the subject who talks to the superior about his or her need for counseling. Superiors can also take the initiative when in their judgment someone in the community needs therapy. Let me describe how I, as a religious superior, usually make such a referral.

### **SUPERIOR INITIATES REFERRAL**

I usually suggest that I make the referral. It can be very disconcerting for someone to call a therapist only to be told that the therapist has no time available. So I point this difficulty out and ask the

individual if he wants me to make the first contact with a therapist. Such a question presumes that the two of us have established a basic trust and have talked over what kind of help he needs. Usually, I also tell him something about the therapists I recommend and my experience with them. If he agrees that I should make the initial contact, I ask permission to tell the prospective therapist something about him and his needs so that the therapist can let me know whether he or she thinks he or she can help. For example, a particular therapist may already be seeing as many clients with a certain kind of psychological difficulty as he or she can reasonably handle given his or her own psychic history and training. I tell the person whom I am referring what I would tell the prospective therapist about him. Granted the permission, I then call the therapist and ask whether he or she has time to see one of my men whom I describe. If the therapist agrees to see him, I provide the name and say that he will be calling for an appointment. I then let the prospective client know that the therapist is expecting him to call to make an appointment.

It is important, I believe, for the person to make the first appointment (and, of course, all subsequent appointments) for himself or herself. Even if



the initial impetus to seek counseling comes from the superior, the person needing the help must take the responsibility to seek the help. Adults make their own appointments. Moreover, the contract of the therapist is with the client, not with the superior. The client must not get the impression that the superior and the therapist are in league with one another about him or her.

## **PROGRESS IS CONCERN**

The last statement leads directly to the central question of this article. How much involvement should the superior have once the therapy has begun? First, engaging in psychotherapy does not remove the client from ordinary life. If superiors are regularly expected to ask about the important things in the lives of their people, then they can ask those who are in therapy how things are going in the therapy and whether they are being helped with what they wanted from therapy. The superior is not interested in the details of the sessions with the therapist, but rather with the progress of the therapy. Progress may be slow in coming, but the client should be hopeful that there is light at the end of the tunnel. Conversations with a skillful and caring superior can help a religious in therapy to assess his or her own reactions to the sessions, reactions that can be grist for the mill of the therapy itself. Such conversations can also help the religious to face the difficult reality that he or she does not trust the therapist, again a matter to be taken up by the religious with the therapist. Superiors, I believe, are often a bit leery about asking people about their therapy because they are afraid of being intrusive. But by not asking they may be conveying the message that being in therapy is somehow shameful. Moreover, they may miss the opportunity of being helpful to their people, which, after all, is at least one aspect of the superior's job.

## **BOTH MEET WITH THERAPIST**

Second, a superior may have a legitimate reason to want to meet with the therapist. For example, a female religious in therapy wants to take on a position for which the superior believes her incompetent. They have a number of serious and heated conversations in which the superior tries to point out as kindly, but honestly as possible, why such a position is out of the question. One of the facts in the case, for instance, is that no other religious in that particular institution wants to work with her. One day the religious comes to her superior and says, "My therapist says that you're the problem, that your intransigence is getting in the way of my progress." I believe that the superior could legiti-

mately say that she would like to meet with her and her therapist to talk this out. Another example might be that of a male religious who has been in therapy for over a year but who seems to have made no progress at all and, indeed, is becoming more and more of a nuisance to his community. Moreover, he uses the fact of being in therapy as an excuse for his behavior. His superior could legitimately tell the religious that he would like to meet with him and his therapist to talk over some of these issues and the seeming lack of progress.

Readers will probably have noticed that in the two examples the superior asks to meet with the religious and the therapist together. That is, I believe, the best tack to take. I think that it would generally be counterproductive for the superior to meet alone with the therapist. It could easily sow seeds of distrust in the relationship between the client and the therapist. Moreover, the superior's questions are usually about how best to help the religious use the therapy well or about whether the therapist is getting the whole story from the religious. The only way of handling such questions is in a three-way conversation. In this kind of conversation the superior should not hesitate to tell the truth as he or she sees it. Again, the superior is interested not in details of the therapy, but in the progress of the religious. In the first example cited above, the superior could begin by stating her reasons for wanting the three-way meeting. "Sister Rita told me that you believe that I'm the problem holding up her progress. I'm here to see how I can be of help to Rita." Or, when the issue of the desired position comes up in the conversation, she can explain her reasons for refusing to assign Rita to it, again as kindly, but as honestly, as possible. In the course of such a three-way meeting, the therapist may help the superior to see the client in a new way; the superior may help the therapist and the client to see things in a new way; and the client may see the superior in a new light. At the least, the air is cleared between the superior and the religious, since both have spoken openly before the therapist, and now they may know what the therapist thinks about their relationship. The religious client may better appreciate how committed the superior is to his or her progress in therapy.

At this point I believe that it may be best to stop. The next step may be in dialogue with readers who have specific issues or cases to ask about or objections to what I have said here. The ball is in your court, dear reader.

*Editor's note:* HUMAN DEVELOPMENT will welcome letters from our readers. Father Barry will respond in an upcoming issue.



# The Challenge of Boredom

Raymond Pasi, F.M.S.

**I**n today's world, especially in the priesthood and religious life, admitting to a growing boredom with an important aspect of one's life is no small thing. Like the devoted spouse, the committed religious is not supposed to feel bored with his or her fellow religious or ministry.

Ask the typical American priest or religious to describe his or her life, and you're likely to get a response that suggests a varied and interesting weekly routine. We like to think of ourselves as pursuing work that is both worthwhile and personally fulfilling; indeed, it often is. After all, most of us now have much greater freedom to choose where we work, making it more likely that what we do will match our interests and abilities. In more recent years, many religious also have much greater choice in where and with whom they live.

But along with the freedom to make these choices there has been heavy subscription to the notion that an industrious, prayerful, balanced, committed religious does not get bored with the life of service he or she has chosen or with those fine individuals with whom he or she may live. If an individual has the freedom to choose where he or she lives or works, does admitting to boredom with either reflect a poor choice? Does it say something about the individuals with whom one lives or works? The general understanding is that boredom is self-generated; what does its admission say about the individual?

There is a real danger in denying one's own experience of boredom or in believing it is some-

thing one isn't supposed to feel. No one, no matter how spiritually centered or motivated, is able to maintain undiminished his or her enthusiasm over the years for all the varied facets that constitute life in general, and the routine of religious life in particular.

Regardless of the inherent value of the work or the quality of the companionship available where one lives, boredom is an issue many must deal with in different stages of their lives. Furthermore, priests and religious must confront it within the special structure of their way of life. Little attention, however, has been given to a thoughtful treatment of the problem.

## SENSE OF PURPOSE LOST

By boredom, we are not referring to the fleeting moments of daydreaming that occur as a teacher proctors an examination, a social worker waits for a client, or a religious finds himself or herself with a week off and "nothing to do." When these situations change, the mind springs back to life, and very often, the temporary respite has been a welcome change.

Individuals suffering from more than just these passing moments experience a lack of energy, interest, or sense of purpose in some important area where those qualities had previously existed. A bored priest may not find the structure of his parish work conducive to the full expression of his talents. He may feel that his pastor or bishop does not



recognize his abilities. A brother may feel that the school he works in is too structured to allow his creativity to flourish. Another may have simply grown bored with the "same, tired dinner stories night after night."

Over the years, the numbers in most religious congregations have dramatically dwindled. Many religious now live in smaller communities, and they are expected to interact in a daily, interpersonal manner that was not part of their way of life twenty years ago. Familiarity with one another greatly increases, particularly with those who have known each other since their days in formation. Boredom with one another can set in, particularly when allowances are not made for the possibility of growth and change in ourselves and others over the years. "Not only what the others say, but what they do, has become so predictable, so routine," I heard one sister comment.

Whatever the aspect of life with which they feel bored—work, living situation, relationships, leisure—most individuals offer similar accounts of what it feels like when they experience more than the ordinary, expected tedium that is part of everyone's life. Short-cuts are taken whenever possible. Interest in others (at work or home or both) can fade. Rectory or community life, even under the best conditions, simply becomes an environment to be tolerated. Procrastination increases; distractions are sought. One person describes it as feeling like "I'm on automatic pilot without knowing where I'm heading."

If not addressed, a constant sense of tedium in one area can gradually (or even suddenly) move into other aspects of one's life as well. Yet for some, the inability to confront the growing boredom they feel can continue for years. This may be partly due to a conscious or unconscious feeling that nothing can be done to improve the situation.

Some, aware of a growing sense of tedium in their life, tend to focus on possible external causes: the other members of their rectory or community, the limitations "imposed" on them by their place of employment, the lack of opportunities for new experiences or new contacts, or the frustration of limited financial resources. An individual may feel that educational decisions made (or imposed) years ago now preclude a change of employment. (This is particularly true of those who, for whatever reason, have ruled out the possibility of reeducating themselves for a new profession.)

At the same time, efforts at spiritual rejuvenation may prove increasingly difficult, in part because of the dwindling energy available for any sustained activity requiring effort. The thought of embarking on a program of religious reading, for example, may seem more burdensome than enriching. Making the effort to seek out a spiritual director is always a project that can be put off until next week. Tentative plans to try to improve one's prayer life

may crumble quickly from a lack of enthusiasm or energy.

Those who are more inclined to look internally may feel they are simply getting lazy while getting older, losing their commitment to their work or some aspect of their vocation. For some, it can prompt focusing on a dramatic move, such as leaving the priesthood or religious life, largely to reduce the ennui. Unfortunately, those living in rectories and communities frequently excuse a lack of energy, enthusiasm, or interest in someone with whom they live. Unlike the man or woman whose spouse or children may challenge them to a certain level of activity or response, many priests and religious let the prolonged signs of boredom in another go unquestioned. Their attitude is simply "live and let live."

## DEPRESSION CAN RESULT

As time goes on, the ways in which individuals deal with a sustained feeling of boredom are, of course, numerous. One person watches television during every free moment; another finds himself eating almost constantly. One religious stated that as her boredom with her work and community life grew, she continually sought opportunities to earn money for costly dinners at the best restaurants. Another found himself frequently moving to new assignments with the hope that new settings would provide an answer. Compulsive buying of gadgets and "toys" can be another attempted solution, or even endless hours of escape through nonstop reading. One's preoccupation with sexual feelings or frustrations can intensify and serve as a distraction from one's boredom.

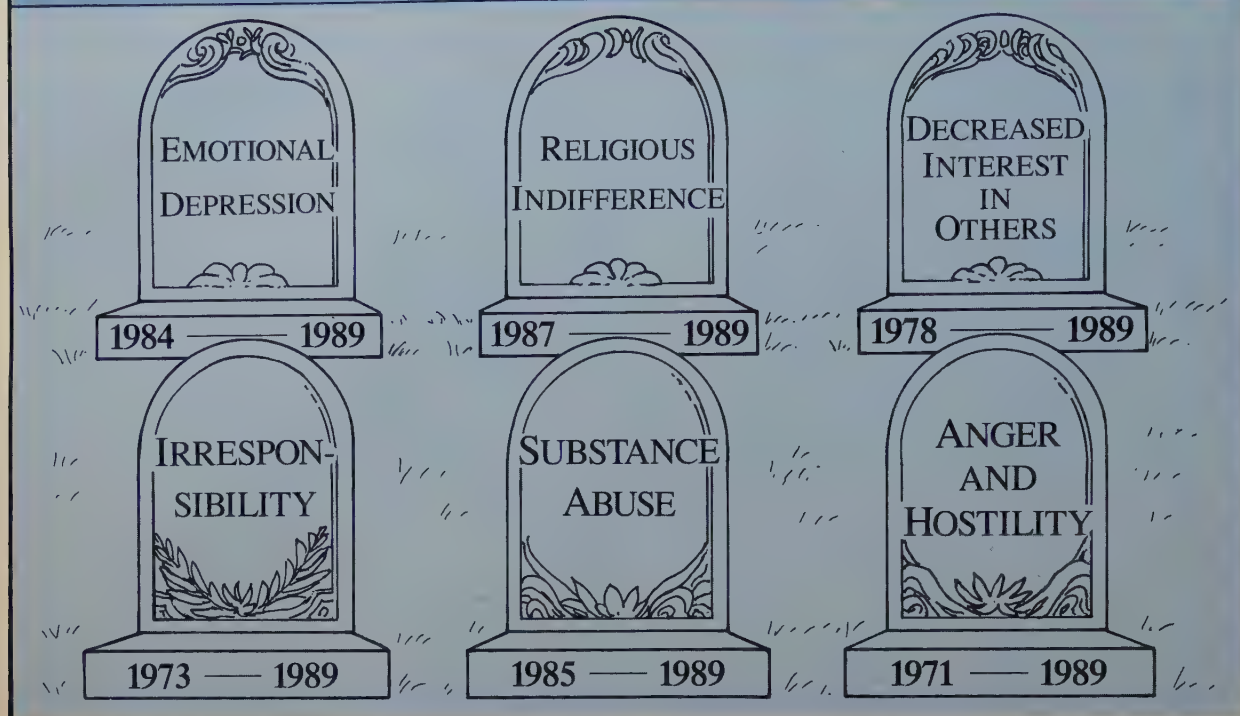
Unfortunately, while some of the solutions mentioned above may provide temporary relief, they can exacerbate the problem of dealing with boredom. Just as others in the community lose interest in the compulsive buyer or television viewer, for example, he or she loses interest in the others with whom they live. A cycle is set in motion that becomes difficult to disrupt.

Prolonged feelings of boredom should not go unchecked indefinitely. As ennui spreads into other areas of one's life, problems that can develop include depression, most notably, and a growing indifference to the religious basis for one's vocation, an unwillingness to assume new responsibilities, a decreased interest in others, an increased tendency toward substance abuse, and more frequent feelings of hostility and anger.

Educated, talented, and interesting people are more likely to find themselves becoming increasingly bored with some aspect of their lives than are unimaginative or lethargic individuals. The former, generally speaking, focus more on developing their individuality and potential and are therefore more apt to feel that their expectations are not



# LETHAL EFFECTS OF BOREDOM



being met. It must be noted, however, that these individuals are far less likely to wait patiently for the boredom—which they might consider stagnation—to resolve itself. This group may be in the best position to address the problem when it arises; by their very nature, they are less inclined to tolerate dissatisfaction for great lengths of time.

## ISSUES FOR REFLECTION

What can one do, then, to relieve the boredom that can set in, before it affects other areas of one's life? The first step is to determine whether or not it is indeed boredom that one is experiencing. Is there a specific, identifiable area in one's life where variety or interest no longer exists? After reflection, if one discovers he or she lacks interest in *all* areas of life, the problem is more likely some form of depression. Should that be the case, it would be wise to continue examining the issue with an insightful and trusted counselor or therapist.

If one suspects, however, that the tedium experienced arises from a specific area, there are a number of questions that one might reflect on. This

reflection may, in time, suggest a course of action. Some possible issues for consideration include the following:

**Apostolate and Ministry.** Have I lost a sense of mission or a sense of purpose in my work? Have I taken the time to reflect on the value of what I am doing with my life and with my particular ministry?

Is there a new project I can become involved in that suits my interests yet is harmonious with other responsibilities I have assumed?

Is it time for me to move on to different work, or even a different place of employment? Have I let the fear of such a move prevent me from investigating it? On the other hand, is this a solution I've tried before with little success?

Could I (and those with whom I work) benefit from redirecting or renewing my interest and energy within my present ministry?

Have I invested time and effort pursuing opportunities for professional growth and renewal? How often do I read the professional literature that is available in my field?

Is it time for me to investigate the possibility of



reeducating myself in preparation for a different ministry in the near future?

**Personal Health.** Have I allowed myself to grow overweight or lazy? Do I make an effort to eat a healthful diet? Is there some type of exercise I could take up regularly? Am I spending too much time with passive activities, such as watching television? Am I developing a tendency toward substance abuse, such as excessive drinking?

**Relationships.** What is the quality of my relationships? Do I make the effort to develop intimacy with friends? Do I tend to fantasize about an "ideal" relationship or relationships outside my present circumstances or vocation? When did I last risk revealing some aspect of my inner self to a friend whom I trust? Are there any ways in which I have become alienated from myself, my interests, other people? To what extent do I have difficulty admitting weakness or limitations to myself or to others?

What defenses do I use at home or at work to keep others at a distance? Are they always necessary or in my best interest? How do my individual relationships with members of my family fit into my life? Can they be improved?

Do I allow for the possibility that those I have known over the years may have grown or changed? Do I prefer limiting them to my knowledge and perception of them from years ago?

Have I lost interest in listening to others, particularly to those with whom I live? Have I become the type of person who thinks he or she has all the answers?

Do I ever make an effort to expand my circle of friends, to get to know new acquaintances? Do I ever give someone I don't know well the opportunity to get to know me?

Have I lately become more hostile, angry, or cynical in my relations with others? If so, why? Are there specific steps I could take to adjust how I feel?

To whom and to what do I feel emotionally attached? Are the emotional connections in my life healthy and satisfying ones?

**Spiritual Life.** How am I enriching the quality of my interior life and my spiritual life? Would a spiritual director prompt me to do more in this area than I would on my own?

Am I comfortable spending time by myself? Do I actively seek opportunities for solitude? To what extent am I in contact with my own inner feelings?

**Leisure.** Are there creative ways I can occasionally spend my free time or do I use work as an excuse to avoid having to deal with leisure? Is there an interest or hobby I have always had that I could spend time exploring?

Do I frequently find myself fantasizing about all I

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**The individual must  
identify and then  
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could do if I lived in a different geographic location, with different people, with a different financial situation? How realistic are these imaginings? Have I experienced any of these changes before to no avail, or is it time for me to consider steps toward making a change in one of these areas?

#### **SELF-EXAMINATION NECESSARY**

Undoubtedly, many of these questions have been considered, at least briefly, by an individual experiencing a pervasive sense of boredom with some important area of his or her life. For enthusiasm and interest to be regained, however, serious and thoughtful analyses are necessary. In some cases, it may become clear that the dissatisfaction that is experienced is disturbing but temporary: when a particular circumstance changes, one knows the dissatisfaction will pass. In many other cases, however, preparation for the future or some new course of action must take place. In short, the individual must first identify and then reestablish control over one or more important aspects of living that have grown dull, lifeless, or draining.

Without such self-examination, one may find oneself withdrawing from others and increasingly dissatisfied with personal relationships or with ministry. If a decision is made to correct a situation after a great deal of time has passed, more dramatic, difficult changes may be required.

Like so many other challenges or difficulties we face in life, the experience of boredom need not



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## If not addressed, a constant sense of tedium in one area can move into other aspects of one's life as well

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develop into a major problem. For boredom is a part of life that many of us will experience at times to a greater or lesser degree. Priests or religious who find themselves in a prolonged period of pervasive boredom should honestly acknowledge this feeling without guilt or embarrassment and without seeing it as a value judgment of themselves,

their ministry, or their community. As with other feelings, boredom's existence is not the problem; it is the refusal to face it that can contribute to greater difficulties down the road.

One should, then, honestly examine his or her life, work, and relationships to determine which areas are most in need of the breath of new life. Consideration might then be given to the means by which that renewed life can be awakened. Personal and professional assistance, such as spiritual direction or individual counseling, may be of help. In some cases, a new ministry, a sabbatical, or retraining are steps that one must consider. Whatever one's unique situation and ultimate decision may be, it is important to fight inertia and pursue the means necessary for a richer, more fulfilling and productive apostolic existence, for the greater glory of God.



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## Odors Have Power Over Memories

**T**he events of the day—a bus splattering mud on you, being yelled at by your boss, or seeing a movie you enjoy—create a cognitive bias that makes some memories more likely to come to mind while others become less probable,” wrote Howard Erlichmann, a psychologist at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, in the most recent issue of *The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. An experiment he conducted with his colleague Jack N. Halpern showed that “things that make you feel good prime more happy memories, while things that get you down prime sad ones.”

The two researchers tested the power of pleasant and unpleasant odors to influence memory. They directed volunteers to smell either almond extract, which most people find pleasant, or pyridine, a chemical with a pungent odor, and then to bring to mind memories of

specific incidents and to describe them. As reported by health writer Daniel Goleman, in *The New York Times*, “Those who recalled their memories while smelling the pleasant odor recalled close to 15 percent more happy memories than unhappy ones. The unpleasant odor caused a bias in the opposite direction: those smelling it recalled about 10 percent more unhappy memories than pleasant ones.”

Erlichmann says, “The effect is certain to be stronger outside the laboratory in natural settings—the smell of the sea, the aroma of a meadow, apple pie in grandma’s kitchen.” He explains that this is the case because people are more at ease in natural settings. One important conclusion of his study is that how you view earlier years in your life may depend more on what is happening today than on the facts themselves.



# DON'T IS A FOUR-LETTER WORD

Marilyn Wussler, S.S.N.D., M.S.

**O**ut of the experience of working with women religious in a therapeutic setting, I am becoming more and more aware of how I have constricted myself—a pattern not unlike that of other men and women in community life—and learned over a period of years that “don’t” can be, and often is, the antithesis of growth. Most specifically, the “don’t” triad that is characteristic of an enmeshed or dysfunctional family has, I believe, been too indicative for too many years of many local houses of religion: Don’t feel . . . Don’t trust . . . Don’t talk.

According to Charles L. Whitfield, M.D., in *Healing the Child Within*, there are estimates that from 60 to 80 percent of today’s men and women religious come from dysfunctional family settings. If that is even remotely true, then we have brought into religious life the constrictions, prohibitions, and proscriptions of family dysfunction.

## DON'T FEEL

In an enmeshed family feelings are repressed. What is important is protecting the family name, hiding the dysfunction from the outside world, guarding the status quo, certainly not recognizing or dealing with the pain inside the self. The child in a dysfunctional family learns to bury the feelings of shame, anger, fear, of being used, not to reveal the self’s truth, ultimately not to risk even letting the self feel. When these feelings go undercover, so also do feelings of delight, autonomy, confidence, and awareness. Eventually, the child in the enmeshed

family setting becomes an automaton—a robot-like reactor to circumstances.

Don’t feel. Think of your local religious house as a reconstituted “family” incorporating the dysfunctions of several persons from their families of origin. What counts for each is protection of the family of origin and protection of the local members from outside influence, so making things appear fine to the outside and guarding the status quo. In how many religious houses has there been a “maverick” who wouldn’t accept what had always been going on there, who was branded, scapegoated, orphaned, and left to fend alone in that community. But should that person dare to reveal feelings of shame or anger or fear or of being used, some members will discount those feelings, others will run to the the rescue with an emotional band-aid, others will wilt into invisibility, others will change the subject—anything to steer far away from the dangerous, but most real, feelings of another.

Don’t feel. In houses of formation, how often is the bad told with the good? Are feelings of jealousy, grief, abandonment, and isolation allowed to be experienced fully and expressed? Is there emphasis on intimacy, connection, and courage to be myself fully?

## DON'T TRUST

Dysfunctional family members learn first not to trust themselves. As feelings get avoided or dis-



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## There are estimates that from 60 to 80 percent of today's men and women religious come from dysfunctional family settings

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counted, or both, the self goes underground. A facade of self begins to emerge: the person learns different ways of communicating that don't rock the boat, different ways of reacting that avoid conflict in any form, different styles of relating to each other that isolate the person in the loneliness of nonfeeling and nonempathy. Sadly, the self can finally no longer even be found or touched; there is no longer a self available to trust. Then one facade meets another facade, and trust becomes impossible. Mutual trust can only develop when each person is self-trusting.

Don't trust. Bringing to community the facade that hides the real me, the real self, the female or male religious continues the pattern of doubt and suspicion. Few of us, I believe, will readily acknowledge this pattern. Who will admit to self-doubt or to suspicion of others? Yet, observation of community interaction all too often reveals a basic lack of trust among members. Should someone break the pattern, begin to show the real self, there will be collusion to block the "infringement" of "privacy," or "intrusion" into "my space."

Don't trust. In formation programs, is trust in self encouraged as much as trust in the formation personnel, other postulants/candidates, or novices is? What happens when there is conflict between personnel and the formation clientele? Is there a win-lose situation developing? Is "power over" invoked? What methods of evaluation are used for the novices? Is there a mutuality, a sharing, an affirming of the truth of both sides?

### DON'T TALK

Pre-Vatican II experiences carried this dysfunctional way of dealing with issues in community to

the extreme. In families of origin, there might have been whispers of alcoholism, physical abuse, sexual acting out, but probably not. More often, these phenomena became the skeletons in the closets, there, but never attended to. And woe to the person who dared speak out. Even if there was not someone in the family who spoke out, was there anyone who talked about, challenged, or shared feelings about the methods of discipline, the reality of "too many kids," the experience of being oldest and having to carry responsibility for younger siblings' behavior, being lost in the middle or alone as the youngest whose other siblings were almost grown up? Or the stigma of having a learning disability, or of not knowing where dad was most nights?

Don't talk. In community, that changed with renewal programs. Suddenly, dialogue became "in." From silence to sharing—seemingly overnight. And there was panic and bumbling and silence. There was fear and tension and confusion. Many tried—valiantly—to engage in dialogue, but behind the trying was the nonverbalized, unwritten pattern of the family of origin, "don't talk!" So dialogue was doomed. Going through the motions of sharing left people flat or feeling more abandoned and unheard—and untold pain resulted.

Week after week I watch sincerely committed women religious try to learn new patterns of interaction. At the Personal Growth Center where I work, one of the weekly group experiences is a support group designed to address each person's issues that arise from community living. I am awed and I marvel at what happens over a period of weeks when it becomes okay to talk; efforts are weak, insecure at first. Then miracles of bonding happen as the layers of defense against each person's truth begin to peel away.

Don't talk. What encouragement is given in formation programs to deep sharing; to acknowledging feelings; or to admitting the difficulty of celibacy, the problems with obedience, the struggle with simplicity of life, or the woundedness of working for justice? What kind of forums are being provided to counteract the experience of the truly formative years in the family of origin? Do we even discuss the kind of dysfunctions our new members might have brought with them and that bump up against each other in formation programs? Do we deliberately confront these? Refounding of community rests on refinding of the truth of myself.

### "DON'T" OBSTRUCTS GROWTH

"The sower went out to sow." Some seed—the word of God, my own sacred word, the words of others—fell on a footpath and were trampled underfoot. Don't feel. Some seed fell on rocks. Don't trust. You'll break apart if you trust. Some seed fell on thorns. Don't talk. You'll be pricked, even choked, if you try to talk.



Don't is a four-letter word. It constricts and obstructs and cripples growth of the self. I believe determined, concerted efforts are needed by all of us, men and women of the church, to feel and to trust and to talk. All any of us can bring to each other and to ministry is the self. Let it be a self untrammelled by "don't."

A starting point of my repertoire of response can be examination of my consciousness. Begin by identifying the temptation to not feel, not trust, not talk. Under what circumstances, or what situations, and with which persons, is the self plummeted into doubt or fear? Is this a pattern? Once the tendency to "don't" is noticed, articulation of the tendency, the pattern, is the next step. Are there some feelings I'll reveal but not others? What are the "silences" that intervene, affect, and manipulate community-sharing experiences?

Claiming "my power," moving away from enabling dysfunctional behavior to continue by owning and naming its effects is a beginning. Crucial to the growth of the seed is the preparation of the ground. My hope is in "refinding" myself, in taking a needed, demanding first step. My hope is that there are others who will walk the journey with me.



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# Postnovitiate Religious Formation

*A Period of Transition Calls for Special Care*

*Joel Giallanza, C.S.C., M.A.*

**T**he novitiate is an especially graced time; even church law defines it as the beginning of religious life. It stands alone as the first "official" point at which a person assumes the traditions and practices of a particular religious institute, with the intention of remaining faithful for life. Although the period before this is an important preparation, it cannot lay claim to the same intensity of involvement and call to commitment that necessarily mark the canonical novitiate. It is no surprise, then, that novitiate formation is the subject of continuing reflection, study, and evaluation.

Though novices themselves may be hard-pressed to believe it, the novitiate does inevitably come to an end. That ending point will be the beginning of these reflections. The period of postnovitiate formation, from initial incorporation to perpetual commitment, opens new horizons for the person. Those horizons may include specialized training, academic studies, some other preparations for ministry, or direct involvement in the ministries of the institute.

Even before those horizons are clearly in focus, however, there is a transitional period that extends from one's departure from the novitiate site after initial incorporation to the time when familiarity with and comfort in a new residence and new responsibilities are evident. It is difficult to define the boundaries of this transition because each per-

son responds uniquely to changes in life. In focusing on this period, my hope is to support and assist novitiate and postnovitiate formation personnel in their efforts to guide novices and newly incorporated members into and through the transition.

The move from the novitiate to the postnovitiate setting obviously involves change. However eagerly novices look forward to the completion of the novitiate experience, they may be apprehensive about moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar. Usually, this apprehension surfaces several weeks before the celebration of initial incorporation. There is really no cause for concern with this unless a novice's behavioral or attitudinal pattern is dramatically affected by the anxiety of completing the novitiate. Undue anxiety in this regard is symptomatic of other unresolved issues. Most novitiate programs do include some discussion of separation anxiety precisely because separations tend to characterize not only the completion of the novitiate but the initial years in religious life as well.

Newly incorporated members develop habits and routines that reflect those they adopted and found useful in the novitiate. There is no guarantee, however, that those habits and routines will be integrated with the requisites of postnovitiate formation. The change that necessarily comes may or may not be appropriately assimilated, depending



on how the individual responds to the way the change affects three major areas.

## CHANGE IN ENVIRONMENT

Postnovitiate formation usually entails settling into a new residence, but that may also mean a different state, a different climate, and even a different cultural base than that of the novitiate environment. For example, in my own province, newly incorporated members move from the novitiate in upstate New York to the postnovitiate in central Texas. The winters are different (causing sighs of relief), the summers are different (causing praise for air conditioning), the pace of life is different, and the rich traditions of the Hispanic culture are prominent. This change of setting can include other elements, depending on the program of postnovitiate formation for a particular province or institute. Whatever those elements may be, it is important to recognize them as parts of this transitional period. They will inevitably affect the availability and use of time and thus the levels of personal energy for study, ministry, prayer, community, or recreation.

Much less immediately tangible will be the change of tone that comes with the new setting. Tone has many facets; it can be somber or spirited, insular or inviting, half-hearted or hospitable. No single element constitutes tone; the size of the postnovitiate community, the spectrum of personalities, the daily schedule, the "way things are done," the availability and modes of transportation, and even the implicit or explicit reputation of the community contribute to the tone and quality of life within the postnovitiate environment. Whatever other components are identified as setting the tone, they too must be recognized as parts of this transitional period. They will inevitably affect attitudes toward, involvement in, and enthusiasm for the tasks at hand.

Both the setting and the tone of the postnovitiate environment affect personal routines. The personal and communal quality necessary for addressing this change of environment is flexibility. On the personal level, this necessitates an openness to discovery and the patience to learn other ways of doing things. Personal responsibility and integrity are of the highest priority here. Although the influence of the environment is not to be overlooked, it must not be used as an excuse for laxity. On the communal level, flexibility necessitates an openness to the suggestions of new members. Not every suggestion will be feasible, but there should be a forum for discussion and a willingness to explore the pros and cons of the suggestions that are proffered.

The change of environment from novitiate to postnovitiate should not be debilitating; rather, it should be a stimulant for growth. Newly incorporated members may undergo some setbacks in a

variety of areas. Such setbacks are of little or no lasting consequence if personal honesty and communal support combine to build the necessary bridges for crossing the transitional period.

## CHANGE IN PEOPLE

Newly incorporated members may or may not be with other members of their novitiate group as they continue their formation. At the conclusion of multiprovince and intercommunity novitiate programs, it is not uncommon for the participants to go their separate ways and never cross paths again. But even in those postnovitiate programs where several members of the same novitiate group participate, there will be other community members in residence. Just as adjusting to the change of environment takes time and energy, meeting new people and developing new relationships will take emotional time and energy; so, too, will establishing one's place and identity in the postnovitiate community. The complexities of living in a new environment and coming to know new people are compounded by the separation anxiety experienced when those with whom novitiate formation was shared disperse.

Merging into the postnovitiate formation community takes time, time to know others and time for them to know the new members. Community life does provide opportunities for this mutual necessity: common meals, leisure time, house meetings, and shared studies or ministry. Involvement gives flesh to these opportunities. If the opportunities are not used, then the individual remains peripheral to the mainstream of community life.

The experience of meeting new people, knowing that they already constitute a local community into which one is moving, has a taste of excitement, a touch of anxiety, and a tinge of wonder at what others will think. A similar, though probably not as pronounced, excitement, anxiety, and wonderment may be experienced by those already in the postnovitiate community. Genuine efforts must be made to go beyond first impressions, to resist that all-too-human temptation to size up and categorize others on the basis of a few initial and random encounters or of previous relationships, regardless of their similarity. Everyone in the postnovitiate community bears this responsibility; if the efforts are not mutual, they will not be effective. Judgmentalism and separatism are out of place in postnovitiate formation, indeed, in any phase of formation.

The people with whom newly incorporated members live, associate, and work after the novitiate will affect their identity and, ultimately, their self-image and self-esteem. The personal and communal quality necessary for addressing this change of people is humility. On the personal level, this



necessitates an openness to others as individuals, openness to their idiosyncracies, routines, opinions, and convictions. More than mere tolerance, this openness enables one to learn from others, to be surprised and vulnerable and understanding. It is the ground of healthy interaction with others. On the communal level, humility necessitates an openness to new personalities, new information, new ways of doing things, new perspectives. More than mere absorption, this openness enables a community to explore and to experiment with whatever could enhance its quality of life. This is nothing less than openness to whatever will be, for the future of religious life will emerge from the men and women presently requesting incorporation.

The change of people from novitiate to postnovitiate should not be disarming; rather, it should be an introduction to a broader spectrum of the personalities and skills and gifts that make up one's province or institute. Newly incorporated members may feel out of place at first. Such feelings quickly dissipate as new relationships and new responsibilities are embraced and developed.

## CHANGE IN PURPOSE

Although a change in purpose may not be immediately evident, it underlies the changes in environment and people. By "purpose," the specific emphasis of postnovitiate formation is meant. The primary goal of developing and strengthening one's commitment to religious life has not changed; obviously, that is a constant goal throughout life. The emphasis, however, does change. The novitiate is an introduction to and an initiation into religious life within a particular institute. The postnovitiate builds on that, seeks to deepen it, and focuses on professional preparation for ministry or actual involvement in ministry. This change of purpose will involve activities other than those that became so familiar during the novitiate; and it will thereby call forth the development of new skills that will bring to light new gifts.

Change of purpose is inseparable from the changes of environment and people because it is directly affected by them. Postnovitiate formation does not duplicate the novitiate, it builds on it. Thus, the environment and the people must be consistent with that purpose if they are to be effective components of the postnovitiate experience. Newly incorporated members should be given the assistance and guidance they need to understand clearly the purpose of the program and to adopt the practices and disciplines that will be most beneficial to them.

The personal and communal quality necessary for addressing this change of purpose is fidelity. On the personal level, this necessitates making the effort to maintain the priority of commitment to religious life and of deepening that commitment.

Personal fidelity also involves maintaining a healthy balance among the elements of religious life—studies or ministry, prayer, and community. On the communal level, fidelity necessitates consistency and continuity in expectations. As newly incorporated members strive to become part of the postnovitiate formation community, the explicit and implicit expectations associated with belonging to that community must be stable to some extent. If they change frequently and haphazardly, then they are untenable and unfair. They must be as consistent as possible and should progress realistically from one to another so they will be attainable. They must be as continuous as possible. Inconsistent and random expectations, left unaddressed within a formation program, are an injustice to newly incorporated members.

The change of purpose from novitiate to postnovitiate should not be disorienting; rather, it should involve a sense of accomplishment for what has gone before and a willingness to embrace the challenge that lies ahead. Newly incorporated members may be hesitant in taking initiative because everything seems unfamiliar. Hesitation is not an inappropriate response to the unknown, provided it does not paralyze one's ability to be involved. Encouragement from staff and peers transforms hesitation into an energetic involvement and confident determination.

## TWO ADDITIONAL CHANGES

Two changes are so interwoven with the preceding three that they are separated here for special mention. The first is a standard change in most instances: the move from novitiate to postnovitiate usually and appropriately involves a change of program directors. For postnovitiate formation to be effective, newly incorporated members and the director must be attentive to and must learn one another's "style," modes of communication, gifts, and anything else that would enhance mutual understanding. Thus, honesty and docility must be common priorities. The director must strive to know the ways in which the Lord is leading the new members; and those members must, in turn, consider seriously the recommendations, suggestions, and insights of the director.

Newly incorporated members may have heard the opinions of those who claim to give them the "facts" about the postnovitiate program and, in particular, the director. And, the director may have been "alerted" to the ways and wiles of one, some, or all of the new members. Mutually held suspicions do nothing to advance, or even begin, the postnovitiate formation process. Openness to learn from and willingness to trust one another are much more healthy, mature, and wise starting points.

The second change is probable. The move from novitiate to postnovitiate frequently involves a





## REQUIRED FOR SUCCESSFUL ADAPTATION DURING POSTNOVIATIE FORMATION PHASE

change in the spiritual life. Environment, people, and purpose will surely influence the approach to and rhythm of communal prayer; there may be similar changes in personal prayer. Differences in externals, such as time of day and available resources for prayer, will need to be adjusted to. The alternative would be to adopt a communal and personal mode of prayer that is inflexible and thus insensitive. With this move there will more than likely be a change of spiritual directors. This, too, will necessitate some adjustments.

This change in the spiritual life can also touch experiences in prayer. All of the changes mentioned thus far can combine to make prayer seem much less engaging than in the preceding months. Distractions can be more frequent and extended, maintaining quiet can be less successful, God's presence and activity may seem very remote, and one's entire spiritual discipline can appear to be dissolving. These experiences are especially unsettling if the final months of the novitiate were marked by steady progress.

It is beyond the scope of these reflections to comment extensively on this "dry" period in the spiritual life. It is important to affirm for newly incorporated members, however, that such experiences are not definite signals of a diminishing spiritual life or even a compromise of commitment to prayer. Such experiences may be nothing more

than the spiritual life adjusting to the changes of the recent weeks and months. Maintaining perspective is critical; this period must be seen in light of one's total spiritual life and development. That perspective can be safeguarded by fidelity to prayer and continuing discussions with a spiritual director and the director of the program.

### CRITERIA FOR CONTINUED GROWTH

Responses to these changes will vary among newly incorporated members; however, there are some guidelines that can assist them in growing with and through the changes. These same guidelines can be used by postnovitiate formation personnel as behavioral criteria to support and encourage those who are new to the program and to challenge them during interviews and evaluations.

#### Spiritual Life

1. Participates faithfully and actively in the prayer of the community
2. Accepts positions of leadership and responsibility in community prayer
3. Remains faithful to a discipline of personal prayer and a regular program of spiritual reading
4. Initiates regular meetings with a spiritual director
5. Participates in an annual retreat



### Personal Life

1. Continues to assimilate the values, practices, and traditions of the institute as manifested in personal behaviors
2. Strives to become increasingly aware and understanding of the diversity of ages and personalities within the community and remains approachable in attitude and disposition
3. Expresses clearly any comments, questions, responses, and opinions, etc., in community meetings, everyday conversation, and relationships and strives to listen and to understand
4. Develops leisure activities and interests other than those related to ministry or studies
5. Maintains health through a balance of diet, physical exercise, and necessary medical care

### Community Life

1. Participates faithfully and actively in the life of the community (prayer, meals, meetings, leisure, household tasks)
2. Shares generously personal gifts and skills within and for the community and takes initiative in supporting the common good
3. Relates to others with respect and courtesy
4. Acknowledges accountability for decisions and behaviors in light of commitment to religious life
5. Cooperates and coordinates with community authorities and initiates regular meetings with the program director

### Apostolic/Academic Life

1. Fulfills professional obligations
2. Cooperates and coordinates with co-workers and supervisor
3. Undergoes an annual evaluation of effectiveness in ministry by an appropriate supervisor
4. Continues to develop professional skills
5. Maintains a realistic balance of responsibilities in ministry or studies, spiritual life, personal life, and community life

These guidelines are not complete; they must be augmented to reflect the goals of a particular program and the ideals of an institute. Still, they can provide a basis for reflection and discussion, a building block for continued growth in the midst of changes that accompany this period of transition.

### FORMATION IS LORD'S WORK

Newly incorporated members will enter the post-novitiate formation program having already established personal routines, patterns for daily life, methods of getting things done, and strategies for continued growth. The tendency will be to preserve those routines, patterns, methods and strategies as proven means of growth. There is no reason why those ways of functioning cannot continue to be means of growth, provided they can be adapted to the changes of environment, people, and purpose that inevitably come with this phase of formation.

Regardless of the changes that emerge and regardless of the programs that are developed to address them, formation to religious life remains always the work of the Lord. This truth must be embraced as the first principle and foundation of religious formation. All is grace; everything moves and grows and continues to develop with the Lord's loving guidance. Thus, newly incorporated members as well as formation personnel must acknowledge before the Lord that "everything we achieve is truly the result of what You do" (Isaiah 26:12).



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## Olympic Views

1.

Olympics    apogee of the body  
the swimmer at seventeen with hand-clasp  
overhead "I did it"    unremitting practice  
leaps    kicks    slam aces    a Lightning  
Lady limber to her long bright nails  
some backflips onto a thin high strip  
and on the edge of limelight tantrums

2.

Olympics beaming into jail    onto  
the dormant in dull jump suits  
the suave announcers an element of din  
clang of the cell gates    tattooed  
torsos around card tables    confinement  
for bodily abuse    this a turnaround  
time    the prayer of false  
starters to be fired off again

3.

Barstool Olympics    at a gregarious  
late hour cheers    the indulgence  
of nationality    and catcalls for  
the Soviets    but a distant look  
on the ex-riflemen of rice paddies  
the peppering of vets    contemplative  
of who knows what    heroics foreign  
to them    their drain of youth

4.

alumnus of the Winged "O"    lord knows  
i tried    mere Juvenile    the Club  
did not confer prowess    my late-life  
jarring over asphalt has made up  
some distance    but the gold  
true gold    that is for racers and  
hoop-shooters wheeling themselves  
for the jerky movers    heads  
incapable of game plan    who team play  
all the same    in a storm of thrills

## Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

James Torrens, S.J.

A reading circle to which I belong chose for discussion a book with this unpromising title, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*. I was expecting, I must confess, one more piece of avant-garde fiction. That there is more to the title—*And Other Clinical Tales*—did not really change my perception. And my premonitions were at least partly justified. The book is strange indeed—strange and wonderful.

An actual man, a gifted musician and conservatory teacher, did actually mistake his wife for a hat. It happened at the end of his visit for diagnosis to Oliver Sacks, a clinical neurologist and author of this book. Sacks observed that during the visit, "Instead of looking, gazing at me, 'taking me in,' in the normal way, he made sudden strange fixations . . . as if noting (even studying) my individual features, but not seeing my whole face, its changing expressions, 'me,' as a whole."

Here was a man, Dr. P., who, as Dr. Sacks could see, "was lost in a world of lifeless abstractions. . . . He construed the world as a computer construes it, by means of key features and schematic relationships." At the end of the session, Dr. Sacks tells us, "he reached out his hand and took hold of his wife's head, tried to lift it off, to put it on." A sufferer from agnosia, in lay terms, nonrecognition, Dr. P. had miscalculated the object.

This seemingly bizarre incident is the first case of neuropsychological disorder in a book that is



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**The powers of survival,  
of the will to survive  
as a unique  
inalienable individual,  
are, absolutely, the  
strongest in our being**

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crammed with them. Dr. Sacks uses it "as a warning and parable" of what happens routinely in his own field, neurology. Because of concentration on plotting the organic causes and typical features of dysfunction, that is, on trying to be a science, neurology and its great practitioners fail to attend to what he calls "the judgmental, the particular, the personal."

What fascinates Dr. Sacks is not etiology and the natural history of diseased conditions so much as, in the words he chooses from Ivy McKenzie as an epigraph, "the human subject striving to preserve its identity in adverse circumstances." And despite the fact that outcomes are never sure, Sacks expresses confidence, backed up by one incident after another, that "the powers of survival, of the will to survive as a unique inalienable individual, are, absolutely, the strongest in our being: stronger than any impulse, stronger than diseases." In the case of Dr. P., for instance, the survival strategy was to substitute body music for body image, to incorporate the very simplest action, such as putting on shoes and socks, into the rhythm of a song.

We are much more familiar with sufferers who are the opposite of Dr. P., human beings who seem imprisoned in the particular, deprived of concepts, without power to generalize. We refer to the condition generally as "retardation," where the I.Q. hovers around 60. Sacks produces an unsettling example, a pair of identical twenty-six-year-old

twins with prodigious numerical powers, besides eidetic memories of any day of their lives. They can tell what day of the week any date will fall, or what will be the date of Easter for the next 80,000 years. They can tell instantly how many objects—matches, paper clips, etc.—have been spilled on a table, but they cannot do simple subtraction or multiplication. They are idiot prodigies, patronized and exploited by the media, so obsessed by meaningless particulars that they seem never to have developed personalities or identities—unless the identity be private enjoyment of their incredible games of calculation.

For Dr. Sacks, the twins are like a buoy, a warning signal. In most cases, Dr. Sacks maintains, the preservation of the concrete in brain damage, far from reducing a creature to the subhuman, rather spells preservation for "the essential personality and identity and humanity, the *being* of the hurt creature." Sacks refers with a kind of reverence to "the world of the simple," the "disposition which gives them their poignant innocence, transparency, completeness, and dignity." Take Rebecca. She could not use a key, or match a shoe to a foot, or find her way around the block. Yet she loved sitting in the garden, "seemed to have little difficulty following the metaphors and symbols of even quite deep poems," "could organize her otherwise ill-knit and clumsy movement" into a dance, and absolutely depended on stories for her "sense of the world." She reacted with anguish and also dignity to the death of her care-giving grandmother, and she was capable of some important decisions on her own behalf.

#### **HEART NEEDS A HOME**

Dr. Sacks, with the help of his beloved mentor, the Russian neurologist Dr. Luria, has clearly come to love these "unsung heroes or heroines of neurological affliction." Another is Jose, "The Autist Artist," whose mind is largely closed to the word, the verbal, and whose world is closed to influence from without. At the age of eight an encephalitis of sorts left Jose with a temporal-lobe disorder and in the condition of a "'fulltime' epileptic, autistic, perhaps aphasic, retarded child." He retained, nonetheless, "an unusual passion and power to draw." Sacks tells about discovering and fostering this artistry. He reproduces many of the young man's sketches, which have the fine detail of the old botanical artists, and vivid touches and subtle humor. Jose "has a passion and a real power for the particular—he loves it, he enters into it, he recreates it. And the particular, if one is particular enough, is also a road—one might say nature's road—to reality and truth." But how precarious the future for this simpleton artist. How much he needs an intimate, empathic relationship, "a home for the heart."



This book is a roller coaster of feelings. We sink, for example, with "The Disembodied Lady," who loses entirely the sixth sense that we all take for granted, proprioception, the feeling for all of our muscles, tendons, and joints. Because of a numbing of nerve endings her whole body went blind, became ungovernable, and she had to fight her way back to seminormality by an extraordinary feedback of the visual sense. In the case of "Madeleine J.," on the other hand, a sixty-year-old blind woman with palsied hands, the result of years of pampering when everyone mistakenly did everything for her, is suddenly given for the first time the use of her hands. "Who would have dreamed that basic powers of perception, normally acquired in the first months of life, . . . could be acquired in one's sixtieth year, . . . and that in this blind, palsied woman there lay the germ of an astonishing artistic sensibility." For Madeleine J. turns out to be a gifted sculptor!

The breakthroughs make one want to cheer. The struggles bring the sweat out on the reader's brow—as in the case of Witty Ticcy Ray, with Tourette's syndrome. "The blind force of the sub-cortex" drives him to multiple tics of extreme violence and also into continual crises "caused by his impatience, his pugnacity, and his coarse and brilliant 'chutzpah.'" Ray is a jazz drummer of virtuosity, but also a man possessed. The therapist charts his own blunders in responding to Ray, and their conversations imagining a future where the drug haloperidol could stabilize Ray's life without reducing him to a zombie. Ray's adrenaline excess had been a strength as well as weakness. His case illustrates what Sacks finds true in many others as well, a definite place, almost a need, for illness within the process of achieving identity, becoming an individual.

To me the most touching moment in the book concerns "The Lost Mariner," an ex-sailor named Jimmie whose alcoholism produced Korsakov's syndrome, wiping out two decades of memory. He is a pleasant fellow, a quick problem solver, who seems to be reduced to grayness by his lack of past and future. Dr. Sacks thinks of him as a "lost soul."

In the home staffed by sisters where Sacks is consultant, he asks a sister, "Do you think he *has* a soul?" The doctor gets a real lesson when advised to watch Jimmie in chapel.

I saw here an intensity and steadiness of attention and concentration that I had never seen before in him or conceived him capable of. I watched him kneel and take the Sacrament on his tongue, and could not doubt the fullness and totality of Communion, the perfect alignment of his spirit with the spirit of the Mass. . . . There was no forgetting, no Korsakov's then, nor did it seem possible or imaginable that there should be; for he was no longer at the mercy of a faulty and fallible mechanism, . . . but was absorbed in an act, an act of his whole being, which carried feeling and meaning in an organic continuity and unity.

Seeing Jim in the chapel opened my eyes to other realms where the soul is called on, and held, and stilled, in attention and communion. . . . He had no difficulty, I noticed, "following" music or simple dramas, for every moment in music and art refers to, contains, other moments. And he liked gardening.

The words of Luria now came back to me: "A man does not consist of memory alone. He has feeling, will, sensibility, moral being. It is here you may touch him."

The words of Luria have become normative for Oliver Sacks. He is urgent to convey in each of these case histories the sense of a genuine person struggling, suffering, sometimes flourishing. The stories are unforgettable. My reaction to them kept phrasing itself, as I made my way through, in an exclamation from Psalm 139, in the King James Version: "I will praise thee, Lord, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."



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# STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT IN RELIGIOUS ORDERS

DAVID COGHLAN, S.J.

**I**n a previous article, "Corporate Planning in Religious Orders" (Summer 1987), a dynamic model of strategic planning was described. This model consists of four integrally related steps: defining the core mission, environmental scanning, internal review, and development of strategic posture. Strategic planning is defined in terms of the pattern of decisions that reveals the charism of the congregation and that produces policies and plans for achieving apostolic objectives congruent with its charism, analysis of the external world, and internal resources. It is but one element in an overall process. To quote one provincial superior, "Planning alone won't renew our apostolates, but our apostolates won't be renewed without planning." This article will attempt to demonstrate how strategic planning is but one element in the wider process of strategic management.

Arnoldo Hax and Nicolas Majluf, in *Strategic Management: An Integrative Perspective*, lay out the interrelationships between organizational dynamics that must exist for strategic planning to be effective. Strategic management consists of working in a set of interrelated organizational systems—planning, control, communication and information, and motivation and rewards—facilitated by appropriate structure. This network operates in both the strategic and operational modes and has a

direct link to the human side of organizations and organizational culture.

## CONTROL THROUGH REVIEW

Management control systems are the processes by which plans are reviewed and progress monitored. Typically, in commercial enterprises, there is a primary emphasis on financial controls through budgeting, and other controls in behavioral and managerial areas. In the context of religious life financial control does have a role, but a considerably less central one. In orders I have surveyed, control was mainly exercised through review of the implementation of the strategic criteria. In one case, for example, when the provincial visited a school, he would review how the objectives relating to teamwork, the catechetical-cum-social-action program, and other goals that were part of the strategic plan were implemented. This review was done with his staff in consultation with the administration of the school.

The consensus among provincials interviewed was that the publication of a province plan was of itself a control dynamic. In all cases the actual publication of the plan came at the end of the process and performed the function of simply putting on paper what was already agreed on and to a



large degree already under way. Having goals on paper is generally a new phenomenon in religious orders, so it could be hypothesized that the emergence of strategic plans that identify the challenges and decisions for the coming five years or so in light of the order's charism and the demands of the environment performs both a motivating and control function. The policy of giving each individual religious a personal copy could reinforce this.

## **STRUCTURE FACILITATES STRATEGY**

Planning, control, and organizational structure must be interrelated. Direct linking of responsibility and authority within the structure to the assignment of tasks and the availability of means to execute them facilitates the strategic thrusts. In one instance, the organizational structure was amended to create a middle group that helped the provincial to reflect on the whole province strategically and whose individual members facilitated reflection on plans and reviews within different sectors of the province. In another instance, groups were established to act as corporate members for health-care units. These groups received the plans of the unit, and with input from the corporate level did theological reflection on the progress of the unit in light of the province's strategy, the unit's own plans and budgets, and emergent needs. The fruits of these reflections were then fed back to the unit's board, which proceeded to integrate them into the unit's own strategy and action plans.

## **COMMUNICATION IS MOTIVATING FORCE**

Religious orders have often been conscious of the need to foster communication and sharing of information within their systems. They publish newsletters, and they arrange social events to bring people together and build friendships. What is at issue in this context is the quality of information/communications systems and whether they keep members abreast of what is happening in terms of the strategy, thus acting as motivating forces within the order. One province saw that each individual community or apostolic unit purchased a similar video system so provincial headquarters could regularly issue policy reports and significant moments in important meetings on video. The members could then tune in to what was happening at corporate and province levels. This also provided a way of integrating the elderly and retired into what was happening. Another congregation instituted a brief newsletter from the provincialate, giving policy developments as they were announced. One problem is that of balancing the communication of information against a possible overload of documentation that people in fact never read. The goal is to build up community ownership of the province's strategic thrusts,

whereby all members share psychologically in the work and aspirations of all the apostolic endeavors of the province.

## **MOTIVATION FROM VOCATION**

The motivational and reward systems in some respects are the most complex. Motivation for a religious is grounded in the sense of vocation and mission. It is inseparable from the sense of personal calling from God and from a fundamental life commitment to the particular religious order. This perspective is begun in the novitiate, developed through the formation process and spiritual direction, and experienced throughout the life of the religious. Edgar Schein, in *Organizational Psychology*, argues for an approach to the human being that is complex and allows for development dynamics. In one province's published plan there were separate, brief addresses to the elderly, the middle-aged, and the young, stating what was being asked of each of them. Through all the provinces I studied for one order, there was a consistent focus on continuing education as a formative influence. In times of constant change, renewal of theological constructs, personal development, and particular apostolic skills are persistently required.

In integrating motivational and reward systems with the organizational structure and the strategic thrusts there must be congruence between corporate objectives and organizational behavior. In each of the orders that I have studied, implementation of the strategy was accompanied by approval and by assignment of key resources, i.e., religious personnel.

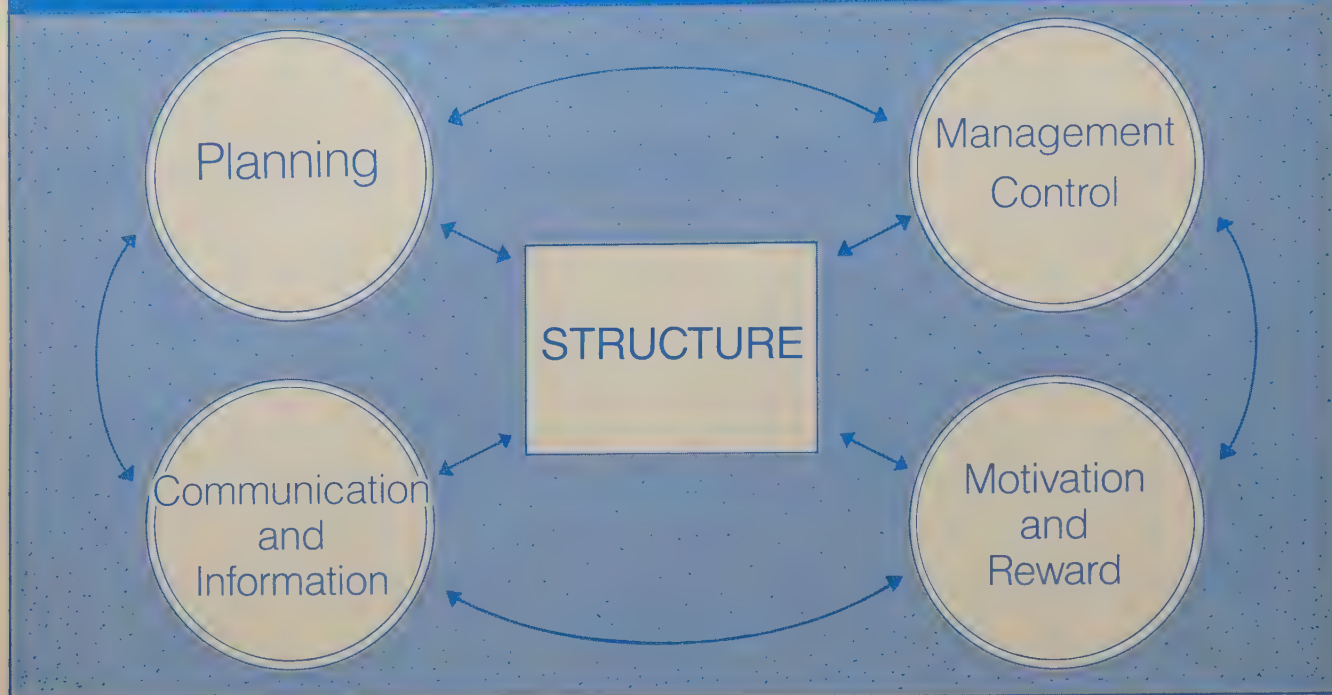
There is always a danger, however, that approval by the provincial will become an end in itself. In the context of religious life, the provincial is explicitly given a parental role in caring for the members. The official title of "Father Provincial" or "Mother Superior" has a built-in role that can be an occasion for creating or fostering dependence. Therefore, corporate approval as a method of rewarding can have hidden pitfalls.

The strongest motivation comes out of a sense of being missioned by God, through the religious superior. This sense is ultimately grounded in prayer and in the individual religious's relationship with God. Similarly, it is empirically demonstrated that potential members are attracted to particular religious orders by the sight of a committed group of people who are happy together, doing something perceived as worthwhile.

In each of the orders I have studied, part of the strategic plan was devoted to integrative issues. Typically, policies on community life, maintenance of the sick and elderly, alcoholism, government, and vocations were articulated. These policies were set with an eye to maintaining an appropriate balance between adaptation to external circumstances and pur-



# INTERRELATED SYSTEMS IN AN ORGANIZATION



suit of internal integration, in keeping with situational analysis and articulated purpose.

## CLARIFY STRATEGY CONCEPT

This article focuses on strategy, assuming that operational management continues effectively. Religious management needs to be educated, however, in the concept of strategy and in the difference between strategy and operations. Strategy (your plan toward a goal) and operations (what you do to carry out your plan) coexist—in the organizational structure, the control systems, the reward systems, and the planning systems. Operations are not to be understood as simply “short-term” strategy. Strategy emphasizes choice arising out of the integration of core mission, environmental scanning, and internal scrutiny.

In the congregations I have studied there were structures by which operational management functioned. My studies focused on the approaches through which strategy was facilitated. As we have already seen, a structure whereby a group reflected strategically with the provincial at the corporate level was instituted in one case. In all the cases the choice of three to five criteria-cum-guidelines followed the conventional pattern of the strategic-management literature. Day-to-day operations should be reflections of the strategic choices and

decisions the organization had made. Hax and Majluf qualify the relationship between organization structure and strategy. The organization structure should (1) facilitate the allocation of resources among the various apostolic units of the province; (2) support the implementation of preferred strategies for each apostolic unit; (3) permit the adaptation of existing apostolic units to the changing environment; and (4) allow for efficient execution of short-term operational tasks.

## GROUPS POSITIVE FORCE

Temporary groups or task forces are frequently used in the formulation of policy and are viewed as having a significant role in building consensus. Frank Friedlander and Barbara Schott, in “The Use of Task Groups and Task Forces in Organizational Change,” show how a group can have advantages over an individual by learning change-agent skills (diagnosis, action, evaluation, and building rapport) more easily. The group allows for a high quality of input and can influence top management, particularly if its members have high status themselves. Setting up task forces or ad hoc committees requires careful planning if they are to be maximally effective. Autonomy and collaboration (between the task force and the rest of the organization) are forces that can pull in opposite direc-



tions and so need to be harnessed. The output of a task force in the form of implementation and actual changes is the key element in the reward structure of religious life. Within the complexity of how a religious is motivated there is the effect of being listened to and having an impact on the strategic direction of the community. This force should never be underestimated.

Much of organizational government and administration is done in groups. In religious orders there are different uses of groups, varying according to the statutes of the particular religious order. Some of the orders I surveyed are governed in a democratic system with the provincial and consultors a decision-making body. In others, the provincial office itself is a team office. In still others, the system is primarily monarchical, with any focus on groups or teams dependent on the personal style of the provincial. It is becoming increasingly more difficult, however, for one person to operate from the top, and so, currently, there is typically a more frequent use of groups in making policy. The policy-making group is a key factor in any analysis of policy. A group's performance is contingent on a number of process issues, like group size, the nature of the task, the style of the leader, and the internal processes of the group.

Both the literature and the experience of organizations show that groups are a positive force, though their use requires expertise and skill.

## PROVINCIAL ROLE PIVOTAL

Consistently throughout the strategic-management literature there is evidence that the role of the chief executive officer (CEO) is pivotal to the entire strategic process. The researchers say that the CEO's ownership of the process is the foundation on which other building blocks are erected. Kenneth Andrews, in *The Concept of Corporate Strategy*, emphasizes the role of the CEO as the "architect of purpose." The CEO's role in the strategic process is not expressed simply as being "for" it or even leading it from the top but rather is seen in more fundamental terms. The literature speaks of strategy being a style of management, a way of being. Strategy is often seen as being the primary concern of the CEO. In all the orders I have studied, the provincials were very active in the strategic process. It had become part of them and their way of thinking about their provinces. One member of the provincial team remarked, "I just couldn't see us existing without planning. It's part of us, and I don't see how it can be a problem for others." One provincial personally initiated the planning process in his own province. He generated a sense of purpose and energy around what he was doing and created loyalty to the direction in which he was leading the province. His way of governing became closely associated with the strategic process and,

later, the actual plan. There was a consistency built in between how he led and the content of the process.

## FOLLOWER TRAINING NEEDED

In the context of strategy, consultation, and decision making, participating in policy-making groups makes new demands on the individual religious. In pre-Vatican II times, a religious was practically never consulted. Decision making was a top-down process. The follower followed. Ronald Lippitt, in looking into the challenges and requirements of leaders and followers (in "The Changing Leader-Follower Relationship of the 1980s"), believes that followers must be taught specific skills in regard to consultation, participation, and upward exertion of influence. For too long there has been an emphasis on leadership training. Now there must be follower training also in conjunction with leadership training. This is especially needed in religious life where individual nonexecutive religious are being asked to reflect on their own apostolic activity, to participate in team reflections, and to share their reflections in the planning process. Meetings are multiplying. An assumption in the strategic process is that in the future there will be considerably fewer religious in the Western church and that those religious will need to be clearer on what they are doing and why, and to be more team oriented in their ministry.

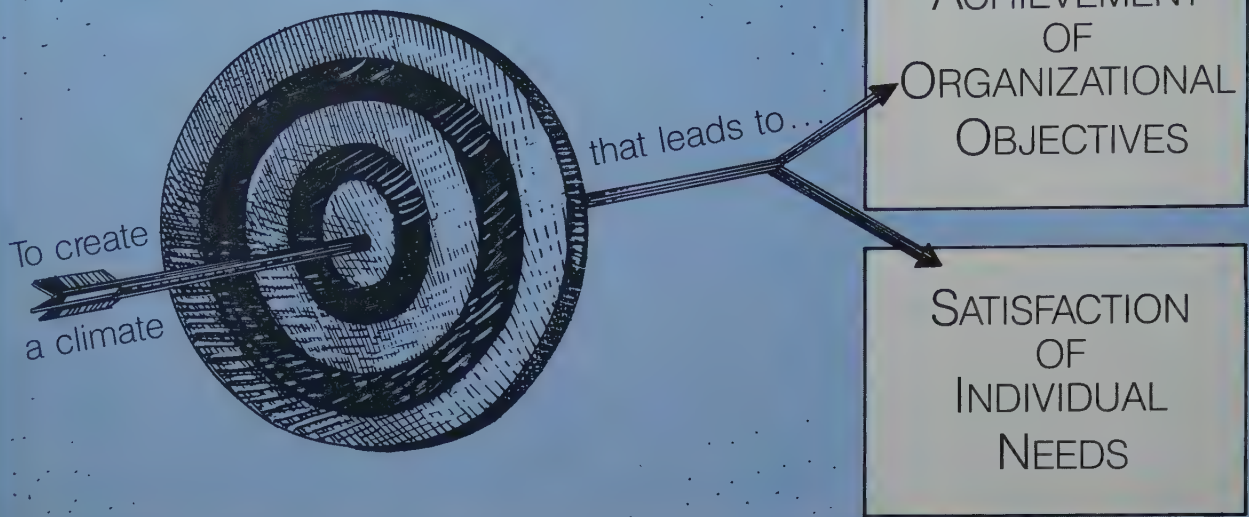
## BASIC ASSUMPTIONS CHALLENGED

Many of the questions that arise out of the interrelationship of the strategic focus and the organizational structure, motivation, and control system affect the individual and groups in a way that opens up further questions about organizational culture. Schein, in *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, defines culture as "the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems."

He also makes the point that because such basic assumptions have worked repeatedly they are likely to be taken for granted and to have dropped from awareness. It could be hypothesized that the adoption of a strategic posture would involve a challenge to existing basic assumptions. Assumptions that give priority to integration rather than to adaptation were specifically confronted in one congregation. Moving from being enclosed and somewhat monastic to not being enclosed and not monastic challenged assumptions about the focus of community life and its relationship to the apostolic



# THE AIM OF AN ORGANIZATIONAL LEADER



endeavor. In another example, assumptions about individualism and teamwork were challenged. Criteria relating to teamwork were explicated and attached to rewards, making it difficult for members of the province to maintain old assumptions about individualism. Accordingly, apostolates were rewarded for showing movement toward new assumptions.

It was in the religious formation sector that there was the clearest evidence of attempting cultural change. Since it is in formation that the socialization process occurs, one would expect to find indications of how the strategic thrust can be integrated into the new generation of members. The central dynamics of the strategic process of one province were given expression in the strategic directions of the formation policy: "Some areas where we need to formulate our formation program policy more carefully [are] (1) formation for teamwork-collaboration; (2) formation in the use of the process of reflecting on experience in the light of the gospel, coming to decisions, taking action, and evaluation; (3) formation in commitment to work in the service of the local church; (4) formation in commitment to solidarity with the poor and to work for justice.... Now we must work at making [this] explicit in our way of living and acting." This example demonstrates the concern to

place the new assumptions into the socialization process so that they will become normative.

## FOCUS ON INTERDEPENDENT SYSTEM

Judging from the research I have done, there is considerable evidence to show that religious orders have been complementing their planning with appropriate adaptations and reinforcement from the other organizational systems. The adoption of a strategic posture and the heavier emphasis on adaptation challenged assumptions and prompted new ones. The use of task forces, integration of strategic posture into formation programs, and corporate groups leading by example are some indications of how cultural change is being affected. The centrality of the role of the provincial in owning the strategic thrust and making it his or her style of leadership is emphasized in both the literature and research. Each provincial interviewed was clear about the force of the role and its centrality in effecting change.

There must be a focus on the interdependent organizational systems in the formulation of strategy. Both the conceptual material (Hax and Majluf) and the evidence from my study of congregations support this. Religious orders when engaging in strategic planning must plan for the support of the



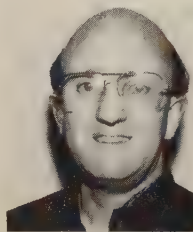
strategy through the interdependent system of the overall organization. At the center of the entire process is the provincial, with the bird's-eye perspective of the whole province. It is the provincial who as organization leader, personal leader, and architect of purpose is the pivot of the complete process.

For religious orders, the crucial task is to proactively move into the future by adapting their ministries in light of the signs of the times and in accordance with the available resources within the congregation, congruent with the spirit of their charism. Planning is but one activity. It must be complemented by appropriate internal processes that support the apostolic thrust. What religious orders actually do fits into the conceptual framework of strategic planning and strategic management. The explicit articulation of these frameworks, therefore, contributes to the understanding of the continuing change processes that are fundamental to religious orders in a pilgrim people. Much has been reflected on and written about with respect to the growth dynamics of individual religious and local communities. There is need for insight and understanding of how large religious systems, such as provinces or whole congregations, adapt to change and develop the skills of positive adaptation. The strategic planning and strategic

management frameworks contribute to this understanding.

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(signed) James J. Gill, S.J., M.D., Editor-in-Chief



# *A View From the Porch*

*Margaret Cessna, H.M., M.A.*

**P**ut the pain to work. Put the pain to work. Put the pain to work. This mantra is not working. Don't smoke another cigarette. Throw the rest away. They aren't the friends they claim to be. But they're here and closer than any warm body. Where are the warm bodies and kindred souls? There was a promise thirty-two years ago: "Let go of all the rest and you will have kindred souls to share the ministry." An empty promise? Go sit on the porch. Put on the earphones. Watch the kids on the street.

A lower-middle-class neighborhood. White. With dirty faces. Why do they scream at each other so? (Because they don't have a mantra?)

Joseph sold into slavery by his brothers. Centuries later, I am sold into despair and loneliness without knowing why.

She must be six years old. Blue shorts, gray-white T-shirt, sneakers with backs worn into the heel. She sweeps the sidewalk as though it will make the world a more acceptable place. Doesn't she know what struggles lie ahead for her? No. She only waits for the ice cream truck. Her mother, overweight, content, sits on the porch swing and approves of her daughter's attempt to clean the property but yells at the neighbor to get away from the dog.

A sixty-year-old bleached blonde walks by in shorts and tight tank top with a beer in her hand. Where does she think she's going? Doesn't she know she was sold into a special slavery by her brothers in Washington?

My petunias in hanging pots—a spark of beauty and color—reach for the sun. The yard next door has no grass. Dirt with no color, worn smooth by bikes and bare feet. A sign of the future for the kids who live there? Can they read yet?

Thirty-two years later, what does it mean? That identification can come only from pain? What can you do if you don't know who you are? But the pain is never finished. I am never finished. It paralyzes.

Didn't Joseph meet his father again? In a chariot of gold, yet! The thought of that reunion lifts my heart a little. What is the meaning of all of those stories of pain and triumph if not to be able to sit on the porch and think about them?

When I try to see the world through the eyes of the little sweeper and the bleached blonde, my pain eases. (Should it?) The question is how to embrace the loneliness so that it doesn't squeeze the life out of me. What's the trick? What's the trick? What's the trick? Maybe a new mantra. There must be something to those stories. Ruth. Now there's a story. Her faithfulness brought her great happiness in the end but not without intense pain and loss. It's amazing that she did not allow anyone else to influence her faithfulness. I wonder how she did it. She did it, and I guess that's what matters.

The neighbors are yelling at each other again. Where is it coming from? Our own miniworld. Richard just got told that if he didn't leave the dog alone he would be dead. I do nothing to bring a touch of peace to their lives; I just sit and wonder if they know where their anger is coming from. Now they're holding hands. How do their insides take such quick-flash changes? Don't they know that you have to ease yourself out of pain and into laughter? What do they know that I don't?

So, what's it all about? I guess, never really knowing what it's all about and determining, in spite of that, to keep on going.

Conversion from near despair is possible because the little girl across the street got her ice cream, the neighbors are holding hands, Richard is not dead, and Joseph was reunited with his father and brothers. It cannot happen without darkness, without struggle, without loss, without hope. It does happen in our world. It happens in our neighborhood. It happened near my porch.



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# *The Ministry of Fund Raising*

*Paul C. Reinert, S.J., Ph.D.*

**R**eligious, particularly, tend to consider fund raising a worldly preoccupation, even “dirty business,” and at best look on it as bringing two seeming incompatibles—religious life and values, and seeking money—into an uneasy coalition. A religious who engages in any aspect of development, however, is carrying out a genuine Christian ministry, a ministry that should bring spiritual rewards equal to or surpassing the rewards of any other ministry, a ministry that should be respected and appreciated by superiors and other members of the community.

Fund raising and development are dependent on a human phenomenon that we call philanthropy, literally, “love for mankind or human kind, love for all human beings.” The love we should have for all of our fellow men and women is fundamentally a spiritual concept. As a matter of fact, this concept of universal love is precisely the sole criterion that Jesus explicitly established for judging the success of a human life. “What you do or don’t do to and for others, especially those who need it most, you do or don’t do to and for me.” Because of the identification of himself with the needy, philanthropy in the broad sense, i.e., universal unselfish love of our fellow human beings, becomes the essential indispensable evidence of our love of God.

At least three kinds of persons are involved in philanthropy, all of whom should partake in the spiritual motivations and benefits of the process: (1) the fund raiser, the instigator or motivator of the process; (2) the donor; and (3) the beneficiary. It is a revolving process, personal and interpersonal, a continuing interaction between these three persons.

## **COMMITMENT NECESSARY**

For over forty years, I have rubbed shoulders with all kinds of men and women engaged profes-

sionally in fund raising, some as professional counselors, some in development departments of institutions and agencies, some working on their own. Over this long period of years I have seen some achieve remarkable success, others create a flash-in-the-pan record only to disappear, others float from one job to another with mediocrity, and still others leave the fund-raising field after a very short time to do something quite different. During that long period of observation I trust that I myself have matured substantially in my own self-knowledge as a fund raiser. With that background, I am going to be foolhardy enough to try to analyze the most important differences between the successful and unsuccessful fund-raising careers I have observed. Although the list could be much longer, I have identified four spiritual qualities that were all substantially present and intermingled in the successful fund raisers I have known.

First, I put commitment at the top of the list; commitment to the cause and especially to the people the cause represents, to the job to be done, to volunteer workers, to the benefactors themselves. John Gardner says, “People can achieve meaning in their lives only if they have made commitments beyond the self—religious commitments, commitments to loved ones, to one’s fellow humans, to excellence, to some conception of an ethical order—you give life meaning through your commitments.” This is preeminently true in fund raisers, who must commit their time and effort and total devotion. Any fund raiser can put all there is to say about an institution or agency that needs and deserves help in an impressive slide presentation, but what can never be put in pictures or in a brochure is one’s own deep-down personal commitment to the cause.

Deep personal commitment carries with it an inseparable companion quality: a genuine enthusi-



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## Self-aggrandizement in a fund raiser eventually alienates either the donors, the employers, or the community

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asm, not showmanship, that comes from an abiding feeling of privilege in having the joy of perpetuating and enhancing something that is destined to improve the quality of human lives. St. Paul says that God loves a cheerful giver; I am bold enough to add that God also loves a cheerful fund raiser.

Unselfishness always accompanies commitment and enthusiasm in any truly successful fund raiser. A fund raiser who is honestly committed to the cause does not care who receives the credit and kudos for getting the job done. Self-aggrandizement in a fund raiser eventually alienates either the donors, the employers, or the community.

Finally, few vocations or professional careers demand deeper humility or longer lasting resilience than does development and fund raising. Asking for money from someone whose wealth has made him or her arrogant or cynical is frequently a heroic act. Like a parent punishing a child, you will often have to say inwardly, "this hurts me more than it does you." There are people coarse enough to try to make you crawl if you ask them for some form of help. No one likes to be turned down, but it really hurts to be turned down for a bogus reason.

These four inseparable qualities—commitment, enthusiasm, unselfishness, and resilient humility—constitute the spiritual essence of philanthropy in the fund raiser. Ideally, the work should take on the characteristic of a ministry, the same kind of ministry, for example, that characterizes the leaders in the early Christian church. For example, it seems clear that the Apostle Paul considered fund raising a legitimate and important function of his apostolic efforts to forward the Kingdom of Christ. Boldly, he tells his flock that as a minister of the gospel, he must tell them not only to be aware of

the needs of others but to do something about it. In reminding the Corinthians that their brethren in Jerusalem need their help, he ties his appeal for money directly to their moral, spiritual obligation: "Let me say this much: he who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will reap bountifully. Everyone must give according to what he individually decides; not sadly, not grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:6-7).

Paul himself begs as part of his apostolate; he requires and praises the same in his apostolic followers. As he encourages his different flocks to vie with each other in generosity, he insists that those coming to them for this purpose do so in a spiritual capacity: "Brothers, I should like you to know of the grace of God conferred on the churches of Macedonia. In the midst of severe trial their overflowing joy and deep poverty have produced an abundant generosity. According to their means—indeed I can testify even beyond their means—and voluntarily, they begged us insistently for the favor of sharing in this service to the members of the church.... That is why I have exhorted Titus, who had already begun this work of charity among you, to bring it to a successful completion (2 Cor 8:1-4, 6).

### GIVING BRINGS GRACE

A recent psychological survey tried to determine the most frequent and powerful motivations that influence major donors to give. This study suggests that there are four key factors influencing generous donors today.

- *Personal Need.* People don't really give to a cause because of the need of the cause itself, however great it may be. They give because giving fills their own personal needs, because it results in personal satisfaction for them. Your request to prospective donors provides an opportunity for them to do what they would really like to do to become their best selves.
- *Personal Involvement.* Generous gifts usually come most easily from people who are already deeply involved in the cause, largely because the involved person is most likely to have an understanding of the cause and be in agreement with it. Involvement eventually results in identification between the recipient and the donor.
- *Example of Others.* Social scientists find that society recognizes standards of behavior. People look to other people to gauge these standards. The size of the donation, for example, is governed frequently by the size of the gift presumed to be "standard" for the group as a whole. Big givers, especially, will not come through without evidence that others, large and small, are excited about the project and doing their part.
- *Magic of Ideas.* You as a fund raiser may be desperately in need of money, but what you are



selling are *ideas*. The most successful solicitors talk to prospective donors in terms of ideas, not in terms of money.

These factors apply no less to potential donors to *religious* causes. "Grace builds on nature," as theologians say. The same motivations are present in giving for religious causes; if they become "sublimated" they are even more powerful. Human motivations can meld into a spiritual motivation so personal and so subtle that most donors would not mention it in response to a questionnaire even if they knew how to express it in words. The following is an example of the growth of such motivation.

There is an outstanding business leader in St. Louis, an executive for many years at the helm of one of the largest and most profitable companies in the country. Thirty years ago he was hoarding his assets, concerned only with himself, his immediate family, and the pleasures his wealth made available. His interests were fundamentally egotistical and self-centered. The first step was to get him personally interested in something outside himself and outside his tight-knit business concerns. In this instance, he was made to understand the problems and needs of young people who did not have the resources he inherited but who honestly wanted an opportunity to do something meaningful in life by acquiring a college education. He began to support that effort, and this triggered a gradual process of self-discovery, a process within his own personality that was truly remarkable. His interests broadened by the month; he began to realize that giving brings with it a deep sense of personal satisfaction, that by and large people are extremely grateful for a helping hand, that generosity leads to civic leadership and deserved recognition for qualities other than inherited wealth and raw power. To make a long story short, this person, largely because he was motivated into becoming a generous giver, is a fundamentally better, more beloved person than he otherwise would ever have become. And, although I'm not rash enough to interpret the mysterious workings of Divine Providence, it appears that this acquired habit of generous giving has won for him the grace to embrace a much more God-centered religious life than would ever have seemed possible.

Though it may take months or years for a prospective major donor to become convinced, the fact is that in offering a person an opportunity to give, you are opening the door for him or her to enter a new life, a life more closely identified both with the needy of this world and the Giver of all good gifts, a life filled with new happiness and self-fulfillment.

## GOOD ACCOMPLISHED FOR OTHERS

There is a deep spiritual significance and value for the recipient of our fund-raising efforts if, as we should, we do not think of the recipient as an

institution, agency, or something impersonal. That is where we make a major mistake. True, there is no spiritual essence in the strict sense in an institution itself, e.g., in buildings, libraries, retirement home, hospital beds, or operating rooms. But these are not actually the ultimate recipient or beneficiary in the vast majority of our fund-raising efforts. In most campaigns, it is really persons, people, human beings, who are the ultimate objective and recipient, and the spiritual essence of philanthropy insofar as the *receiver* is concerned lies in the fact that we are doing something good, something important for *people*.

The depth and spiritual intensity of our personal commitment to the institution for which we are seeking money is measured and determined by our personal commitment to the recipients. I could never have given over forty years of my life to fund raising for an educational institution like Saint Louis University unless I were genuinely committed to the hundreds of promising young men and women who come to us each year, whose lives now and in the future I am convinced we can enrich with spiritual and material, with divine and human, possessions. So, an essential ingredient of the spiritual essence of fund raising is the good to be accomplished by the fund raiser's work and the donor's gift for other human beings.

The money you raise will, in God's providence, bring about a myriad of wonderfully important results: poor people in underdeveloped countries will gain at least a little more human dignity; handicapped children will be given some hope for a productive life; teachers will be given the opportunity to instruct young men and women how to grow spiritually, morally, intellectually, and physically; your fellow religious will be able to finish out their dedicated lives in dignity and security. In these and many other ways, by making the dollars available, the fund raiser and the donor provide the conditions for the ministry of healing and teaching to reach those who call out for it so desperately. And this essential though indirect participation on our part should provide more than ample personal motivation, the realization of what we are accomplishing for the beneficiaries of our efforts.

## VOLUNTEERISM SERVES GOD

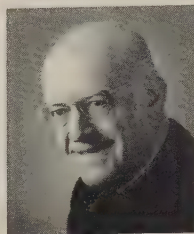
There is a closely related consideration that we as American religious should incorporate into our spiritual concept of fund raising. The volunteer worker, the giver, and the recipient are all motivated, it is hoped, by the spiritual conviction that in serving his or her neighbor a human being serves his or her God. By ministering directly or indirectly to the little child whose twisted limbs we can see and feel, we minister to him whom we cannot see. The most characteristic feature of Judeo-Christian morality is the repeated emphasis on the necessity



of fulfilling our duty to God by fulfilling our duty to our fellow human beings. I am my brother's and sister's keeper. Hence volunteerism is the flowering of the principle set down by the Master as the eternal norm that his Father would use to determine success in the lives of men and women of all times.

Fund raising can and should be an integral part of the spiritual ministry of a community of religious—a ministry on the part of those who do the fund raising and a spiritual ministry benefitting both donors and recipients. I am confident in holding out to you, dear reader, the blessing that Paul promised to all those who give generously *and* to all those who seek support for others in God's name: "He who supplies seed for the sower and bread for the eater will provide in abundance; he

will multiply the seed you sow and increase your generous yield, and those you benefit will pray for you longingly because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"



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## Recognizing Danger Signs of Depression

**S**uicide occurs in children and adolescents... among whom it is a leading cause of death," warns Joel Herskowitz, M.D., assistant clinical professor of pediatrics at Boston University School of Medicine. He adds, "Unfortunately, the problem of depression is often overlooked or misinterpreted, not only by parents but also by pediatricians. One reason is that tiredness, irritability, or anger may be the prevailing emotional state (the mood), not sadness. Another reason is the inability or unwillingness of parents to admit that their child could be depressed. After all, they might say, what is there to be depressed about?"

Herskowitz suggests that a parent—and the same is true of a teacher or coach, etc.—who recognizes a disturbance in a young person's mood lasting one to two weeks or longer "should look also for changes

in sleep (too much or too little), weight or appetite (increased or decreased), participation in usual activities (school, sports, or job), concentration (worsened), or overall activity level (increased or decreased). Suicidal comments or actions are of particular importance."

A parent or educator who recognizes these symptoms of depression should discuss their observations with a physician or other primary medical provider who can then carry out whatever physical examination or testing is appropriate and make a referral to a suitable mental health professional to confirm the diagnosis of depression and arrange a treatment plan. Herskowitz assures, "In this way, many deaths from suicide can be prevented, and countless hours of agonizing suffering can be avoided."



# A CREATIVE COLLEGE RETREAT

MARY DYER, M.S.

I am angry at you for asking us to think about God as a woman," complains a student. Resentment surges in me at this student's blunt misinterpretation of my words: "In the image of God, God created them. Male and female God created them. . . . We have such marvelous masculine images of God! King. Sheperd. Father. Son. Lord. Priest. Prince. Messiah. But we haven't often explored the feminine aspects of God. Since the theme of this retreat is 'finding God in unexpected places,' I'd like to invite you to ponder some of these feminine images of God." Nineteen college students had thoughtfully headed out to the open fields to reflect on this unusual suggestion, but this woman has turned on me as if I had personally accosted her.

I fight back a barbed reply to her verbal attack and instead try to focus on the reason behind her intense feeling. "Why don't you tell me who God is for you?"

"God is Daddy: strong, loving, patient, tender, forgiving."

"What a beautiful image of God. It sounds like you have a wonderful experience of God as Father. How did you come to that?"

"Oh, my dad's so neat! He was always good to me growing up: taking time with me, listening to me, caring about how I was. Even now it's so easy to talk with him."

"I can understand why the masculine image of God is so meaningful for you."

"But not my mom. We never did get along very well. I don't think she really loves me."

Suddenly a burst of words spews from her: "I know I'm inferior as a woman and I don't want to think of God that way!"

I want to enfold her, to take away this scar of feeling less than equal and to give her instead the wonder, the power of woman, but she is not ready yet. We walk down a dirt farm road and there amid the brittle twigs of almost winter, we open up a little to each other's story. Trust comes tentatively, and hostility gradually gives way to comfortable silence, moments of humor, and even a shared hug. I tell her that she can do whatever she wants with the time of solitude and I move away. She is aware of her own thoughts and is hardly aware of my absence. I pray for her and for all who are hurting.

Before the next session begins, she comes breathlessly to me: "I just wanted you to know that I wrote a letter to her. I told her how I'd like to be closer to her and I'm sorry for all the years we haven't been able to talk with each other." Later in a communal meditation, the group prays the Lord's Prayer and I hear her voice softly below the others, "Our Father-Mother who art in heaven. . ."

## PRAYING WITH CLAY

I am humbled to witness such poignancy and feel like saying, "We can go now," but there is more. For all of us. Like the clay in last night's opening



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## **I couldn't help thinking about cartwheels and dancing and singing alleluias**

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prayer experience, we are being caressed and shaped without quite knowing what comes next.

Black clay. A block of it. Thirty pounds of it! I thought to myself, "You must be crazy to lug this all the way from Washington, D.C." But we need it. We don't know each other, and here we are huddled in this darkened house at the end of a rutted path, and even these glowing candles can't replace our fears with openness, with vulnerability. We guard ourselves well.

"For this opening prayer experience we're each going to need a chunk of clay from that block over there—there's a knife next to it—and some paper towels, and a paper bowl of water scooped from that large bowl." I wait. I don't ask or direct, simply present a need. Will anyone respond? With a shrug and no fanfare, a woman approaches the clay and starts slicing chocolate-cake-sized chunks. She holds one poised on the knife, and as if anticipating her gesture, a young man takes it on a paper towel and passes it to another retreatant. Suddenly, the room is alive with silent movement. Water, clay, and towels miraculously appear before each person, and a spirit of delight begins to permeate the room.

"Pray with it. Don't worry what it looks like, it's the feel of it that matters. God as potter, you know. How do we feel in God's hands? Pray with your hands and let your thoughts follow."

Gentle music suffuses the room, and clay sounds act as back-up: slap, squish, thump, stretch, punch, squash, knead. A long time passes and we don't know it. I ask the group to stop slowly, and now we wait patiently for each other's fullness of time. I say

that we don't have to talk about what just happened; we can fold our clay back into a ball for future prayer if we wish.

"I want to talk about mine," says a tall, slender student with grace in her hands and voice. "Mine's a bird. Can you see it?" And we can. "My grandmother used to hold me in her lap and rock me and sing the most beautiful lullaby about a bird. I felt like a bird in God's hands."

"And mine is a turtle. . ."

"A heart. . ."

"This is a pitcher. . ."

Precious stories that help us truly see the figure in a shapeless lump of clay. Awe begins to touch us as if we are on holy ground. I ask the group to lay down their clay, wash their earthy hands, and come out in silence to the star-sprinkled sky. It is November and the trees are bare, blacker even than the night, but the stars are laced through the branches like Christmas lights all white and sparkly. We walk without speaking, in deep communion. The Potter is still holding us as we soak in the smells of farm and fall. We are touched by the sounds of the stars and the brightness of the crickets and the nearness of each other and the breath of our God.

### **REVISITING PAST EXPERIENCE**

Saturday now. Here I am challenging them again when I'd rather stay mellow. "I'm asking if you women in the group would share with each other your reflections on the feminine imagery of God and your own experience of God as women. After you do this, would you plan for all of us a prayer experience based on what you've heard? Men, I would like you also to come together to prepare for us a prayer of healing. Each one of us in this room has known what it's like to be the one left out. Maybe we couldn't play ball well and no one picked us for the team. Perhaps at a dance we were the wallflower because nobody chose us as a partner. Or perhaps we were rejected because of our color or gender or personality. But you know, we've also been the ones who excluded, the ones who told others they didn't measure up, that they weren't as good as we were. Would you help all of us to ask for healing for those times when we were left out and for those times when we put only those like us in?"

I do it once more, that is, generate anger, but this time I don't find out until later, until we come together in the orange rays of sunset for the women's invitation to prayer.

"Before we start," he insists, "I want you to know that this almost didn't happen." We look up, startled, at this handsome athlete who is usually so laid back. "I want you to know that I was really angry, and some of the other guys, too, that we weren't allowed to be in the other group. We wanted to hear what the women had to say. It wasn't fair. Just



because we were men, we couldn't join them. I mean, I was so angry I was going to bust in and say you couldn't make us leave, and two of the other guys were going to also. But then he told us to wait a minute."

We turn to see who "he" is and recognize a well-liked graduate student. "Yeah, that's right. I said, 'Wait a minute, maybe this is how the women feel when they're excluded from something because they're female. Maybe we should try to stay in this anger for a little while and see what it feels like.' So we did, and we didn't like it, but we talked and eventually got around to the healing part, the need for forgiveness. But we'll do that later. Why don't you do your prayer now? We really want to be with you in this."

Nods of assent are visible around the room from the men, and the women, with an air of serious expectancy, have us sit in a large circle. We are mostly interspersed male and female, and there is a feeling of import about what is to come. Sunset fades into twilight and again the candles assume the hushed burden of light. The woman of the clay bird speaks first. She is spokeswoman now, like an elder speaking the wisdom of the whole.

"We found that our experience of God is varied and that we have different perceptions of what *feminine* means. We'd like to share in a litany some of our God images. Please respond with the phrase 'nurture us.'"

The litany starts, circling the group three times with many-textured female voices: God, Mother of all life . . . Comforter . . . Strong One . . . Companion . . . Source of beauty . . . God of gentleness and compassion . . . Rock of safety . . . One who heals . . . Well-spring. As we murmur again and again "nurture us," we feel ourselves calming, slipping into a mode of prayer that continues even when the litany stops. From the silence, she speaks again.

"We also discovered that our experiences of God have often been specific, brought about through experiencing an individual person. Many times, we realized, this experience was conveyed through a gesture or touch. I invite you now to think of someone who has been an instrument of God for you—it may or may not be a woman—and recall if that person ever reached out to you with a gesture of caring . . ."

"I remember," she continues, "my grandmother's good-byes. She'd cup my child's face in both of her warm wrinkly hands and say, 'Take care, honey.' Well, it was like this." And she turns to the person on her left and gently cups the retreatant's face. A moment of stillness, and then he turns to the circle. "My God-person was my friend from high school. I'll always remember his hand on my shoulder when I was having a rough time." He reaches over and touches his neighbor's shoulder, "You're going to be all right." The stories and the gestures move caringly around the circle: a firm handshake,

a tousled head of hair, a light stroke on the arm, a bear hug, a tear wiped away, a held hand. Our memories are stirred as we hear others talk about mother or great aunt, teacher or friend, sister or brother, and we realize our God has touched us many times.

## WATER PROVIDES SYMBOL

It is deeper night now. The men call us to prayer but don't allow us to settle into the cozy candled room that has become like home for us. We are told to stand single file in the long, barracks-like kitchen, cold and unlit. One man addresses us: "Sometimes in our lives, we have all been responsible for shutting another out. Think back and recall one time when you were the excluder." Then he invites us to seek forgiveness and to express it in symbol. One by one, we walk into the next room, which has a large water-filled bowl on a low table. In whatever way we wish, we may express our desire to be washed clean and made new again. Someone kneels before the bowl and scoops up water to bathe face and hands. Another bows and dips a hand into the water, then makes a profound sign of the cross. A third lightly touches the water from head to toe. So many different and personal ways to say, "I was wrong. Please forgive me." As if to accept the sorrow, a male retreatant hands each person a towel to dry face or hands and then indicates that we are to reenter the homey common room.

Expectantly, we wait for all to gather. A college senior speaks to us: "We have just prayed for healing for those times in our lives when we have shut out other people. But there have also been times when we were the ones cut off, excluded. This can be painful, but I'm asking that you think back to a time when you were the one abandoned." Then he requests that I and a priest who is with us place our hands together on each retreatant's head. The whole group is encouraged to pray for the one being touched. Slowly we move through the assembly, a white woman and a black man, who ourselves represent groups excluded. "Heal her, touch him, enfold this one," are words that fill me.

Now it is over. We sit holding the intensity and wonder of this night. Someone remembers last night's stars and we go out to check the heavens. Still there! We align ourselves two on a step all the way down the outside stairway. Lean back, feel a neighbor's knees supporting one, follow a shooting star across the sky.

## MEDITATION PREPARES MASS

Our last morning, and I have my agenda ready for lauds, but a woman asks if she can lead the prayer. Well, isn't this about finding God in unexpected places? She leads us to a meadow and forms



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## And we come, bearing each other as gift

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us in two concentric circles. There she teaches us a dance that celebrates our finding God in each other. Giggles at first and wrong turns with crashes, but soon we are bowing gracefully to each other with shy smiles and gentle movements.

I call the group around me then and ask each person to take a piece of paper that lists one part of the Mass: "Would you go off alone for about forty-five minutes and think about that aspect of liturgy? What does it mean to you? How does God speak to us through that part of the Mass?" With paper in hand, they give me an amused look and amble off to fields or woods or a stream. In an hour, we reconvene.

"I had the entrance procession, and I envisioned people streaming in to the worship space from many different entrances, from all over the world."

"My part was the Gloria, and I couldn't help thinking about cartwheels and dancing and singing alleluias."

"The gospel was what I thought about, and I tried to imagine what it would have been like if I had been the man meeting Jesus in that situation."

"Well, my slip of paper said the bringing up of the gifts, and I remembered being a little girl on our family's farm in Kansas . . ."

We find ourselves moving into her story, which is becoming ours. "My father would be out on the tractor as far as that field way over there by the trees. Mom would fix him a pitcher of ice water, and my job was to carry it to him. Those furrows could be pretty deep for an eight-year-old, and I'd walk and stumble and wonder if I'd ever make it to my dad. But this was my gift, what I could bring, and I'd always manage to get it to him, and he'd give me this big grateful smile and drink the whole thing."

Mass is going to be celebrated out in the field, and we have to walk over many plowed furrows to get there. One retreatant has a cast on his foot and is trying to hop over each mound but is struggling. I and another retreatant run up to him on either side. With a grin, he puts an arm around each of our shoulders, and we slowly move ahead. The others are already gathered at the altar, but they look up, waiting for us to join the circle of worship. And we come, bearing each other as gift.



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# The Gift of Wisdom

William Beaudin, M.A.Th.

**A**rnold Mitchell is a marketing analyst who lives in New York City. The 1970s found him working on various models that he hoped would be able to account for the influential "baby-boom" generation's peculiar notions about what constitutes success. His field of work is called "psychographics," or in common, everyday language, people research. Mitchell, along with his associates, devised several categories of people, each intended to represent "a unique way of life defined by its distinctive array of values, drives, beliefs, needs, dreams, and special points of view."

The most common categories contain those persons known as "survivors and sustainers." Estelle, an older woman knitting in her parlor, is a survivor: she lives in a sparsely furnished apartment, scrapes by on social security, and hardly ever goes out. Her life has a dignity unlike those who are called "sustainers," the type of person we would meet at a casino or a racetrack on a weekday afternoon. They take what life gives them and quickly consume it. These persons are not known for their financial acumen or investments.

The "belongers" make up a third group of persons. For these people all reality is explained in connection with someone or something else and always in terms of a larger group. Dave and Donna, a believer couple, explain their choice of a neighborhood in theological terms: "The Lord wants us to be here." Belongers make up 38 percent of the population. They are traditional and conformist.

"Emulators" constitute about 10 percent of the population and are less conventional and have a mildly dissolute aura about them—like the bartender in a Hawaiian shirt who won big at the gambling table the night before and is making plans to spend his winnings. You probably won't see him putting his money into a retirement plan.

About 20 percent of the population are "achievers." Anne-Marie and Steve are a typical achiever pair. Steve is blunt, athletic, and hearty; Ann-Marie, sipping a glass of wine, talks in a quiet, authoritative voice about her theory of interior design. John, an achiever architect who owns a Porsche, is a driven person. As he says, "You either win or lose and money is a way of keeping score."

The "societally conscious" are aware of social issues and are active in politics, whereas the "integrateds" represent the marketing ideal. They devote thirty or forty hours a month to learning. These persons are involved in literature and art. Integrateds are both creative and prosperous.

These are the categories into which Madison Avenue advertising agencies divide the world. Mitchell goes on to say, "Essentially what we are trying to do is to understand people."

## CONCERNED ABOUT MEANING

It seems we live our lives trying to understand ourselves, our needs, our motivations. Our lives are wrapped up in making a difference, making a point,



making a niche for ourselves. There is a part in each one of us that strives for immortality, and most often the greatest human fear presents itself in terms of a question: Will my life make a difference in this world?

I think there are a thousand different ways of answering this question. The answer is always uniquely our own, however. Mitchell and Madison Avenue would have us answer the question by defining who we are in terms of what we have and possess. The wisdom of the world is always chasing after us. It says, move ahead, move up, keep going, be driven, and if it is necessary, be ruthless. These attitudes are part of the fabric of our society. They affect the work place and family life and even creep into our spiritual life. We can easily fall into the trap of wanting quantity over quality. Our values become topsy-turvy. We find ourselves thinking that it is not the *what* of prayer that is important but rather *how much*.

We are indeed incomplete human beings if we measure ourselves in such a fashion. We are more than our things, our possessions. There is always more to life than we may see at first glance. In a moment of truth, anguish, or insight, our heart tells us there is another way.

## WISDOM ROOTED IN LOVE

Jim Caldwell was born blind and without legs. Named handicapped person of the year in 1985, he is forty-five years old and is an IBM systems analyst. Jim appeared in a TV commercial that aired during the summer of 1986. The ad shows him telling of his difficulty and frustrations and also of his triumphs. He speaks of his children and how someday he hopes they will live in a world where there is more than one way to see and more than one way of getting from here to there. It was no accident that the commercial aired on the Fourth of July weekend. I see in Jim a man who experiences a freedom that few of us even dream about. At first glance, life seems to have been brutal and merciless to him, yet he has turned it into something soft and gentle. Jim Caldwell's wisdom, as I've seen it, is founded in love and perseverance.

A second example is described in a letter from a woman who takes care of the world's forgotten. She writes: "It's 4:30 A.M. and I am trying to figure out why I have been awake since 1:30 A.M., because I am surely exhausted. John and I have just returned from Haiti, which is always trying and difficult, but even more so since the recent revolution. While I walked through the city Soliel, one of the world's worst slums, I was thinking to myself—this is it! This is absolutely the last time I am coming here. It's intolerable. The flies, the stench, the open trenches filled with garbage and waste, the absolute horror of it—never again. I'll stay at the hotel, or better yet, stay home in Florida.

"I looked up and saw a woman coming toward me. Black, and in rags, very thin and tired, all of a sudden her facial expression softened, and she took my face in her hands and kissed me. Very gently and sweetly, an expression of love from one woman to another. Just that, no words, no tugging at my clothes the way children do—just as if she were trying to let me know that her humanity is intact, her ability to love is still alive. This spark is very much present in those who are suffering so intensely."

This woman's wisdom is rooted in love and compassion. We see from such persons' lives that wisdom is a learned response. We *develop* wisdom. We learn it from the example of others.

## SCRIPTURES TEACH WISDOM

We can also learn about wisdom through the scriptures. Psalm 139 is a poem about wisdom and intimacy. It speaks of God's awesomeness and gentleness:

*O Lord, you have probed me and know me;  
you know when I sit and when I stand;  
you understand my thoughts from afar.  
My journeys and my rest you scrutinize,  
with all my ways you are familiar.  
Even before a word is on my tongue,  
behold, O Lord, you know the whole of it.  
Behind and before, you hem me in  
and rest your hand upon me.  
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
too lofty for me to attain.  
Where can I go from your Spirit?  
From your presence where can I flee?  
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
If I sink to the nether world, you are present there.  
If I take the wings of the dawn,  
If I settle at the farthest limits of the sea,  
even there your hand shall guide me,  
and your right hand hold me fast.  
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall hide me,  
and night shall be my light,"  
for you darkness itself is not dark,  
and night shines as the day.  
Truly you have formed my inmost being;  
you knit me in my mother's womb.  
I give you thanks that I am fearfully, wonderfully  
made;  
wonderful are your works.  
My soul also you knew full well;  
nor was my frame unknown to you  
when I was made in secret,  
when I was fashioned in the depths of the earth.  
Your eyes have seen my actions;  
in your book they are all written;  
my days were limited before one of them existed.  
How weighty are your designs, O God;  
how vast the sum of them!*



*Were I to recount them, they would outnumber the sands;  
did I reach the end of them, I should still be with you.*

\* \* \*

*Probe me, O God, and know my heart;  
Try me, and know my thoughts;  
see if my way is crooked,  
and lead me in the way of old.*

That psalm tells us that in the midst of everything God is always with us. God knew us from the beginning, in our mother's womb. Even before a word is on our tongue he knows it. The wisdom of this psalm is rooted in the relationship between creature and Creator. A reflective reading shows us God's care and compassion, that God has created life and loves it and continues to provide it sustenance. We come to see the mystery of life and through the psalmist's eyes realize that it is composed of more than fads or trends or the possession of the latest adult toy. We can see that life has to do with sacredness and dignity.

### SOLOMON EXEMPLIFIES WISDOM

Solomon lived one thousand years before the birth of Christ. The following passage, from the Book of Wisdom (9:1-6, 9-11), is the prayer attributed to Solomon. Before being made king, he begs God for help and guidance. Aware of his failings and limitations, he asks for God's wisdom and receives it. Solomon says:

*God of my fathers, Lord of mercy,  
you who have made all things by your word  
and in your wisdom have established man  
to rule the creatures produced by you,  
to govern the world in holiness and justice,  
and to render judgment in integrity of heart:*

*Give me wisdom, the attendant at your throne,  
and reject me not from among your children;  
For I am your servant, the son of your handmaid,  
a man weak and short-lived  
and lacking in comprehension of judgment and of laws.*

*Indeed, though one be perfect among the sons of men,  
if wisdom, who comes from you, be not with him,  
he shall be held in no esteem.*

*Now with you is wisdom, who knows your works  
and was present when you made the world;  
who understands what is pleasing in your eyes  
and what is conformable with your commands.  
Send her forth from your holy heavens  
and from your glorious throne dispatch her*

*that she may be with me and work with me,  
that I may know what is your pleasure.*

*For she knows and understands all things,  
and will guide me discreetly in my affairs  
and safeguard me by her glory.*

This reading suggests that wisdom is intensely practical, not theoretical. Basically, it is the art of being successful at forming the correct plan to get the desired result. Its seat and center is the heart.

### A GIFT FROM GOD

Wisdom in the fullest sense belongs to God alone. God's wisdom is (1) completeness of knowledge that pervades every realm of life, and (2) the irresistible fulfillment of what God has in mind.

Wisdom, in Solomon's prayer, is portrayed as feminine. She possesses the beauty of many years, having been with God from the beginning of time. As the beloved of God, wisdom witnessed and participated in all of creation. Still, being wise has nothing to do necessarily with being male or female. There are qualities of wisdom, rather, that are both male and female characteristics, that is, strength, creativity, sensitivity, courage, decisiveness, clarity, gentleness, compassion, and flexibility. These qualities are the ones we must draw on to become better persons and better Christians.

It is perhaps most appropriate to see wisdom as a gift. It comes from God and so in the end must return to God. The gift of wisdom assists us in leading a balanced and integrated life. Wisdom acquired and seen in this fashion helps us to be effective and sensitive to those around us, whether it be in the workplace or in our family life. Wisdom allows us to be truly human.

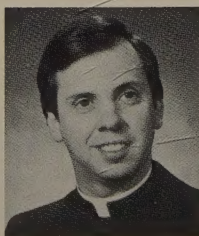
### RECOMMENDED READING

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# BOOK REVIEW

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*Sor Juana: or The Traps of Faith*, by Octavio Paz. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988. 547 pp. \$29.95.

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**T**he quest for spiritual fidelity to God's call in the life of the religious takes many forms in many cultures. Sister Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648–1695), poet and religious of St. Jerome's Convent in Mexico, represents the greatest literary treasure of New Spain (colonial Mexico). Although this volume is a literary study, the window into the spiritual journey of one religious is a gateway to the exploration of the spiritual hungers of an age and a culture quite different from our own but rooted in the same God-given call.

It is difficult for those of us whose spiritualities have been formed without the shadow of the Inquisition or the union of crozier and crown to see the vital link between piety and liberation. Sor Juana, however, had been an inspiration to Latin American spirituality and its struggles for a full century before there was a United States. She lived two centuries before there was a substantial religious life in our culture capable of spiritual and intellectual independence from continental models in following Christ's call.

Although the author of this volume has primarily secular interests and concentrates on Sor Juana's spiritual insights and struggles through the lens of her literary output and her philosophical perspectives, those who read this life with the eyes of faith will see the complexity of the Spirit's action and God's liberating power moving a deeply committed soul. The ambiguities of spiritual direction in that era, especially for women religious, is well docu-

mented. The author, likewise, is sensitive to the wider social, intellectual, and political context that nurtured the poet and provided the background for the religious struggle. The repetitive Spanish style may be difficult for the English reader, but the reader's patience will be rewarded.

The contemporary religious will not only find rich sources for exploring human development and the action of God's grace in another time and place but will be fascinated by the radical difference of context in which spirituality was lived out in that era. Indeed, the very meaning of reform and renewal, openness to God's creation, and liberating engagement, take on an ironically different character when seen as the Spirit acting in the life of this seventeenth-century artist.

Certainly, it is anachronistic to garner specific hints for contemporary spirituality, liberation, and feminism from an author of the seventeenth century. On the other hand, gospel impulses to honesty and intellectual zeal in the face of a closed ecclesiastical, intellectual, and civil society are a perennial contribution to the spiritual life. Her vision and insight can easily be as sustaining for contemporary religious as it is for theologians and literary scholars in the Latin American context today.

—Jeffrey Gros, F.S.C.



Jeffrey Gros, F.S.C., is Director of the Commission on Faith and Order, of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.



# Invitation to Authors

**T**he principal intention of our Editorial Staff and Board in publishing HUMAN DEVELOPMENT is to be of help to people involved in the work of fostering the growth of others. This growth, which is as important for the well-being of society as it is for that of individuals, cannot be achieved apart from beneficial interaction between persons; nor can it be accomplished without the grace of the Creator who wants us all to live our lives as maturely as possible, and who is glorified by our doing so. The articles we publish are written to contribute to the promotion of such constructive interaction among persons, and between them and God.

The intellectual, emotional, spiritual, moral, physical, sexual, and cultural aspects of human development are all of deep concern to us. It is our hope that writers who desire to contribute to the ministry this journal represents will feel encouraged to deal with any of these areas of growth, keeping in mind the fact that our readers include church leaders, pastoral ministers, educators, religious superiors, spiritual directors, athletic coaches, religious formation personnel, campus ministers, missionaries, people performing healing ministries, parents, women and men engaged in lay ministry, and other people of various religious denominations who have in their care persons of all ages whom they want to help develop to the fullest degree of maturity, happiness, and human effectiveness.

We want the articles we publish to be of interest to as many of these readers as possible. We want the content of the articles to shed theoretical light on the various aspects of human development; we also desire to provide as many how-to articles as we can, in which the authors describe for our readers what they have learned from both their successful and their unsuccessful attempts to nourish the growth of others. We are especially interested in presenting articles that discuss the ways that development-related issues and problems are handled and ministries are performed in diverse cultural settings around the world. We want to receive reviews of books and films; reports on research, workshops, symposia, and courses; interviews; and letters to our editor.

In brief, we publish HUMAN DEVELOPMENT so that people wishing to become fully alive and to help others do the same can benefit from the knowledge and experience of writers at home in the fields of psychology, medicine, psychiatry, sociology, spirituality, organizational development, etc., who realize the importance of sharing their expertise with appreciative readers in 140 different countries, and who are generous enough to take the time to put their ideas on paper so that human beings can become what we are created to be: persons being made whole in the image and likeness of God.

Linda D. Amadeo, R.N., M.S.  
Executive Editor





# Human Development: A Worldwide Effort

During the past several years, staff members of the Jesuit Educational Center for Human Development have provided workshops, courses, and programs, along with professional consultations, throughout the world. These presentations have been offered for religious leaders, spiritual directors, formation personnel, pastoral counselors, clergy, religious, and laity. Our staff welcomes invitations to travel, especially to Third World areas, as well as to other regions where topics and issues of the type featured in HUMAN DEVELOPMENT can be profitably discussed. Some of the locations where we have already conducted programs are indicated on this map

<b>ALABAMA</b> 1 Montgomery	<b>HAWAII</b> 11 Honolulu	<b>MONTANA</b> 20 Billings	<b>GUYANA</b> 45 Georgetown	<b>KOREA</b> 57 Kusan
<b>ALASKA</b> 2 Anchorage	<b>ILLINOIS</b> 12 Chicago 13 Moline	<b>NEW MEXICO</b> 21 Santa Fe	<b>HONG KONG</b> 46	<b>MEXICO</b> 58 Seoul
<b>CALIFORNIA</b> 3 Los Angeles 4 Oakland 5 San Diego 6 San Francisco	<b>IOWA</b> 14 Sioux City	<b>NEW YORK</b> 22 New York	<b>INDIA</b> 47 Bombay 48 New Delhi 49 Ranchi	<b>PERU</b> 60 Lima
<b>COLORADO</b> 7 Denver	<b>LOUISIANA</b> 15 New Orleans	<b>OHIO</b> 23 Cincinnati	<b>IRELAND</b> 37 Melbourne 38 Perth 39 Sydney	<b>PHILIPPINES</b> 61 Manila 62 Clark Field
<b>DELAWARE</b> 8 Wilmington	<b>MASSACHUSETTS</b> 16 Boston 17 Worcester	<b>OREGON</b> 24 Portland	<b>ITALY</b> 50 Rome	<b>TAIWAN</b> 63 Taipei 64 Taichung
<b>FLORIDA</b> 9 West Palm Beach	<b>MICHIGAN</b> 18 East Lansing	<b>PENNSYLVANIA</b> 25 Carlisle 26 Wernersville	<b>JAMAICA</b> 52 Kingston	<b>THAILAND</b> 65 Bangkok
<b>GEORGIA</b> 19 St. Louis	<b>MISSOURI</b> 19 St. Louis	<b>TEXAS</b> 27 Dallas 28 Houston	<b>JAPAN</b> 53 Tokyo	<b>ZIMBABWE</b> 66 Harare
			<b>ENGLAND</b> 41 London	
			<b>FRANCE</b> 42 Grande Chartreuse	
			<b>GERMANY</b> 43 Ramstein	
			<b>KENYA</b> 55 Mombasa	